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**SAMUEL A. B. MERCER, General Editor**

**THE LIFE AND GROWTH OF ISRAEL**

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# THE LIFE AND GROWTH OF ISRAEL

A BRIEF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

By

**SAMUEL A. B. MERCER, Ph.D., D.D.**

Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament in the Western Theological  
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**THIS LITTLE BOOK  
THE AUTHOR AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATES TO  
NASHOTAH  
HIS THEOLOGICAL ALMA MATER**



## PREFACE

Israel's gift to mankind was a spiritual and religious one. For almost twenty Christian centuries men have searched her sacred scriptures for spiritual food and they have never searched in vain. Whether her brilliant career be studied culturally, historically, or religiously, abundant results are always assured. Israel's history has always been interesting, her civilization has ever been fascinating, and her religion never fails to inspire. But her history has too often been rendered unnecessarily dull because she has too often been studied as if her career had been primarily secular and not essentially religious. Israel was a religious nation, and it is impossible to study her history without making it religious history. A bare enumeration of dates, names, and events completely misses the essence of her unique career. Consequently the object of this little book has been to write a history of Israel as she was and wished to be—a history of Israel where the secular interests have been subordinated to the religious and spiritual. An attempt has been made to interpret Israel's history in the way in which her own writers often successfully did. And so, events and phenomena are viewed

through religious glasses and measured by spiritual standards.

To every life, individual or national, there is a background and a foreground. The foreground consists of the details of daily duties, of transitory tasks and of ephemeral interests. The background is made up of those plans and purposes, those ideals and aspirations that mould and shape life and character. The foreground of the life of Israel is made up of dates and names and events which were and are important; but the background of her life, the great purpose and ideal, colouring and directing it, and holding the foreground in its firm and regulated grasp, is what is of prime and permanent value in the history of Israel. It is on the background of Israel's history that emphasis has been placed in this little book.

The author has tried to approach as near as possible to the heart and soul of his subject, has attempted to think in terms of Old Testament religious thought, and has tried to express himself with some of the warmth and reality of those spiritual experiences which fill the pages of the Old Testament. He will feel abundantly rewarded for his trouble if he can but transmit a small portion of his own love and admiration of ancient Israel to some of his readers and cause them to thrill, as he does, in response to some of those sublime religious and spiritual ideas and ideals of the Old Testament that through the long ages have moved the hearts of men to wonder, love, and worship.

The growth of Israel has been followed from the earliest to the latest periods in her history, just as one may write the history of a man from the time just previous to his birth until his death. This has been prefaced by a list of important dates as a guide and aid to the memory. A selected bibliography has also been supplied. This is for the use of those who would like to read more fully on Old Testament History. In reading this little book it is strongly recommended that the text of the Old Testament be read and constantly referred to; with chapter I read the Book of Genesis; with chapter II read those portions of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy that describe the doings and movements of the Children of Israel; with chapter III read Joshua, Judges, and I Samuel 1-3; with chapter IV read the rest of I Samuel, II Samuel, and I Kings 1-2; with chapter V read the rest of I Kings and II Kings 1-14; with chapter VI read the rest of II Kings and Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah 1-39, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, and Ezekiel 1-32; with chapter VII read the rest of Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Isaiah 40-66, Joel, Ruth, Jonah, Judith, Job, some of the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, II Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah; with chapter VIII read I Maccabees, II Maccabees, Daniel, and other apocryphal and pseudepigraphical works of the second and first centuries before Christ and of the first Christian century. Throughout a student's work on Old Testament history constant use should be made of Cuneiform, Egyptian, Aramaic, and

Greek and Latin sources that are illustrative of Biblical history. These can be conveniently found in *Extra-Biblical Sources for Hebrew and Jewish History*. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* and *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* should always be handy.

It remains only to thank the Rev. Father Harrowell for his kindness in reading the proof and preparing the index, and to hope that this little volume may add something towards the development of an appreciation and understanding of the world's inspired and greatest religious teachers.

SAMUEL A. B. MERCER.

Hibbard Egyptian Library  
Western Theological Seminary, Chicago  
December 22, 1920

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## A LIST OF IMPORTANT DATES

B. C.

- 4500 Earliest approximate date in Egyptian history.
- 3500 Earliest approximate date in Sumerian history. The Sumerians, in pre-historic times, came westward from the highlands of Elam and settled in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. The rich and varied civilization which they developed was inherited by the Semitic Babylonians, who entered the Tigris-Euphrates valley from the southwest.
- 3400 The beginnings of the dynasties in Egypt.
- 3000 Earliest approximate date for the establishment of Semites in the Tigris-Euphrates valley.
- 2980 The earliest approximate date for the introduction of Egyptian culture into Canaan. The reigning king of Egypt was Snefru.
- 2800 Approximate date of Lugal-zag-gi-si, who introduced Sumerian and Babylonian culture into Canaan.
- 2200 The approximate date of the rise of the First Dynasty of Babylon, otherwise called the Hammurabi Dynasty.
- 2100 The approximate date of the reign of the greatest king of Babylon, Hammurabi.
- Approximate date of Abraham, if Hammurabi be identical with Amraphel in *Gen. 14*.
- 1650 The approximate date of Jacob's migration to Egypt.
- 1292 Rameses II reigned from 1292-1225.
- 1225 Merneptah, the pharaoh of the Exodus, reigned from 1225-1215. He was a son of Rameses II.

## *Important Dates*

xiii

- 1185 The approximate date of the crossing of the Jordan by the Israelites.  
1050 The approximate date of the birth of Samuel.  
937 Division of the Hebrew Kingdom at the death of Solomon.

### **JUDAH**

- 937 Rehoboam  
920 Abijam  
917 Asa  
876 Jehoshaphat  
851 Jehoram  
843 Ahaziah  
842 Athaliah  
836 Joash  
796 Amaziah  
782 Uzziah  
Jotham Co-Regent  
737 Ahaz  
715 Hezekiah  
696 Manasseh  
641 Amon  
639 Josiah  
609 Jehoahaz  
608 Jehoiakim  
597 Jehoiakin  
597-586 Zedekiah

### **ISRAEL**

- 937 Jeroboam I  
915 Nadab  
913 Baasha  
889 Elah  
887 Zimri  
887 Omri  
875 Ahab  
853 Ahaziah  
851 Jehoram  
842 Jehu  
814 Jehoahaz  
797 Jehoash  
781 Jeroboam II  
740 Zechariah  
740 Shallum  
737 Menahem  
735 Pekahiah  
735 Pekah  
733-722 Hoshea

- 742 Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser III, at the beginning of his reign over Israel.  
732 The fall of Damascus.  
722 The capture of Samaria by Sargon II.  
701 Jerusalem delivered from Sennacherib.  
606 The fall of Nineveh.  
597 Nebuchadrezzar took Jehoiakin into captivity. Many Jews were deported to Babylonia.  
586 Jerusalem fell.  
538 Cyrus captured Babylon. He liberated the Jews.

- 520 Zerubbabel began the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem.
- 516 Temple finished.
- 445 Nehemiah, probably, made his first visit to Palestine, and restored the walls of Jerusalem.
- 432 Nehemiah's second visit to Palestine.
- 398 Probable date of the beginning of Ezra's work in Palestine.
- 331 Battle of Arbela, and complete defeat of Darius III by Alexander the Great.
- 175 Antiochus Epiphanes began to reign.
- 168 Desecration of the temple in Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes.
- 165 Judas Maccabeus defeated the Syrians and cleansed the temple.
- 161 Jonathan succeeded Judas.
- 143 Simon succeeded Jonathan.
- 141 Simon conquered the Acra.
- 135 Hyrcanus succeeded Simon.
- 105 Aristobulus I began to reign.
- 104 Alexander Jannaeus succeeded Aristobulus I.
- 78 Alexandra succeeded Jannaeus.
- 69 Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II (high priest) dispute the right to rule.
- 63 Pompey captured Jerusalem. Judea became a Roman province.
- 37 Herod became king of the Jews.
- 4 Death of Herod.
- A. D.
- 6 Archelaus deposed and Judah taken under the direct control of Rome.
- 6 War declared against Rome.
- 70 Jerusalem and the temple destroyed by Titus.
- 90 Council of Jamnia.
- 132 Uprising of the Jews under the leadership of Bar-Cochba.

## A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

In case a student desires to read more fully on Old Testament History the following books are recommended. They should be read in the order given, except, of course, the books of reference and source books.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE ROCK WHENCE THEY WERE HEWN

The rock whence Israel was hewn was found in the most ancient corner of God's great workshop. It had all the characteristics of its environment. But its possibilities were limitless. Its home was the desert, with boundless space as its province, and the blue canopy of the sky as its covering. It breathed the fresh, free air of freedom, and liberty became its birthright.

In the deserts of Arabia many thousands of years ago—at least thirty-five hundred years before the birth of Christ—there happened what has taken place many times in that strange land. The population became so large in proportion to the limited number of oases, or fertile spots, scattered here and there throughout the country, that the peoples on the northernmost borders of the country were forced to migrate to other lands.

These immigrants were a simple folk, accustomed to a free outdoor life. They were shepherds, living in small groups, and presided over by the oldest male member. They had no settled home, but moved from oasis to oasis, taking their flocks with them. At the

close of a day's journey they would pitch their tent, assemble their women and children, count their sheep, and then, under the starry canopy of heaven, set up their family altar and invite their god to feast with them.

Their ideas of deity were simple. There were many gods—numerous divine beings, male and female. The divine life was ever present, surrounding and permeating everything. Every inexplicable event or phenomenon was somehow associated with divine life. How could it be otherwise? A people in its infancy is like a child. Its science, or understanding of things, is of the simplest kind, and its fears are legion. These primitive north Arabian folk, like other primitive people, had, by experience, come to believe in spirit life. They knew that each person possessed a spirit as well as a body. Their dreams told them that; for in dreams a man often has experiences with some relative or acquaintance who in body is really far away, or it might be even dead. There is a spirit in every man—a spirit which is free to go and come, to do and say, quite independently of the body's action. Just so, in the world of external phenomena. Each object has its spirit, or double. The flowing waters, the sighing wind, the rustling leaves, the powerful boulder, the scorching sun, the glistening moon, the twinkling stars, all have their spirits. And because the ways of these spirits are not known, they are all the more mysterious, and full of awe; and because they are often uncontrollable and very powerful, they are respected or feared. Some

of these spirits are harmful and some are beneficent. The former are feared and propitiated; the latter are respected and honoured. The former are demons; the latter are gods. A god may become a demon, and a demon may become a god.

As a rule, a demon or god is local. He is attached to some local phenomenon, being the spirit within that object. But sometimes it happened that, on account of the nature of the phenomenon, a demon or god could be considered capable of migration. This was so especially of the heavenly bodies. Wherever the nomad went he was followed and accompanied by the burning sun by day, and the silver moon or twinkling stars by night. As a wanderer in a limitless desert the scorching sun was usually feared and considered hostile; but the soft and stilly moon, dispensing sufficient heat to cheer the chill of night and enough of light to guide the traveller's way, but not enough to reveal his trail to a possible enemy, was a friendly deity, a veritable god. And thus it was that the earliest nomadic tribes of Arabia, especially, worshipped the moon. The stars were also revered, and so was the sun by those who dwelt in cooler localities. But the moon had ever his devout admirers and worshippers in ancient Arabia. And he could accompany his worshippers wherever they went, and they could adore him as the ever-existing one, the ever-present one, he who is "about my bed and about my path and spieth out all my way", the one in whom we "live and move and have our being".

But at the same time there were other divine beings.



There were the demons of the night, ever ready to hurt and harm, to lure astray, and to take life. And there were the gods, friendly and kind, who dwelt in the sweet, cool water, who presided over the shady shrubs of the oases, and dwelt upon the cool tops of mounds and hills, or who witnessed to some noble act of deliverance or alliance between friend and friend. Whenever the wanderer localized for any considerable time, the gracious spirit of his homestead became his dearest god. There were other gods, but his especial god was the spirit of the local mysterious or sacred place.

Friendly phenomena were sometimes numerous; in which case there was a regular army of gods. These were sometimes organized along the same lines as the people themselves, that is, in family groups, for that was the unit of ancient Arabian social life. The most conspicuous god was the father. There was a mother and there were children. It sometimes happened that these gods became so much a part of the life of a group of people that when the group migrated to other parts they took their gods with them, adding them to the gods of the newly formed home. These new gods were adopted into the family of gods, and sometimes it happened that, because of the power and influence of the new gods, they became heads and leaders in the combined divine family.

The deserts of early Arabia were dotted with roving groups of peoples. Some of these groups were related by blood, some were hostile, and some were friendly. The gods of a hostile group were consid-

ered hostile, but those of a friendly group were considered friends. Of course the gods always helped their own people, or, at least, the people believed so. Very often it came about that two or more related or friendly groups came together and united. In such a case, the gods of the group did the same. The people formed what may be called a clan, and the gods formed a pantheon. When related or friendly clans united they formed tribes and their gods followed suit. When hostile families, clans, or tribes fought and made war with one another, their gods made war.

So it is comparatively easy to understand a primitive man's conception of his god. He made his god in his own image. We all do so to a large extent. His god was a spirit. But he could not speak of a spirit without using terms that apply primarily to an embodied spirit. And so he spoke of the eyes and ears, the arms and legs of his gods. His gods saw and heard, worked and walked just as he did. Moreover, the life of the gods was like his own life. The gods were born, and they died, they loved and hated and worked and played and fought, they married and were given in marriage. They were not expected to be different from man, except that whatever man was and did, they were and did superlatively. They were stronger, wiser, and better than mankind. But they were always partial to their own. The limits of their horizon were the life and doings of their worshippers. They hated, deceived, and made war upon the enemies of their people. They defended

their people under all circumstances, and what their people said or did to another people was right because it was their will. In other words, whatever a group of people did in respect to an opposing group was interpreted as the will of its gods, and the gods' will is just what constitutes *right*. But, within a group the best that the people knew, whether they acted accordingly or not, was ascribed to the gods. Therefore the gods would not tolerate injustice, falsehood, cruelty, or wrong among the members of the same group, that is, among their own worshippers.

Thus, among the early wandering peoples of Arabia there were gods many and lords many. But within the limits of groups of peoples, the very best in intention, thought, word, and deed was ascribed to the divine beings. The soul-life of the people, the desire for nobler things, the trend towards the best, which is characteristic of the human family, found satisfaction in the contemplation and companionship of the gods. There was at least one bright spot in life, one supreme goal, one fountain which never ran dry, one refuge which never failed, and that was God—God not as he necessarily is, or what we think him to be, but God as these children of the desert and the wild understood him. In him they saw their noblest and their best, and to him their human hearts, more sensitive because more unsophisticated than ours, more capable of rapture and joy because more natural than ours, turned, and in him they could realize complete and perfect satisfaction. Their life was more divine than ours because they lived nearer to the gods.

It is a secondary matter that their ideas of God were comparatively imperfect. They were children on the road to perfection, and they lived and moved and had their being in the companionship of the gods. To them the gods were living realities, and they dwelt forever in their presence.

The family life of these nomads was simplicity itself. The father was the head of the family. As a rule, he had but one wife, although there was no rule to the contrary. She was the mother of his children, and, although he owned her in a real commercial sense, yet she was held in great respect and exercised considerable influence as the companion of her husband, and as the lover of her children. Now and then, when a man was rich enough, or when his wife was childless, by agreement with his wife he could take another wife or a secondary wife, but this was exceptional. Among nomadic peoples the number of males usually corresponds to the number of females, and consequently polygamy is not widespread. A man could always take a slave as a wife, but she was always subject to his chief wife. However, this often resulted in jealousy and cruelty, but, in nomadic life, such evils could not spread very far on account of the pressing necessity of simplicity of living.

All property was in the hands of the father; even his wife and children were his property, and could be sold under certain conditions. But ties of nature made the sale of wife and children comparatively rare. In fact, the bands of love which bound the members of these early families together were very strong.

The father loved his wife and they both loved their children. The children loved their parents and were obedient and dutiful. In such a life would be sown the seeds of family love and solidarity that would go very far towards satisfying a human nature which tends more and more towards the creation of spiritual and noble sentiments and ideals.

The social unit was at first the family, then the clan, and then the tribe. According as the unit grew and expanded, so social customs and duties became more and more complicated. The father became the patriarch and chief. His office of priest and prophet of the family was delegated to a specialist or group of specialists. These represented the clan or tribe. Religious rites and ceremonies became variegated. There were many gods to worship and many individual divine peculiarities to be taken into consideration. As a complement of social life new opportunities involved new responsibilities, and new relationships gave rise to new problems and new dangers. Law became more complicated, until there had to be interpreters. Property changed hands, and gave rise to the necessity of distinguishing individual rights. Servitude and slavery became more possible and business had to be, to some extent, standardized. Life became richer and fuller, laden with new dangers but also with new opportunities, open to new suffering but also endowed with new possibilities. The spiritual life was also wider and deeper. New dangers gave rise to new reliance on God and new uncertainties gave rise to new faith. As life's complications multi-

plied so its problems increased and its wonder, awe, and worship assumed a deeper and fuller tone.

Inter-tribal as well as inter-clan and inter-family life gave rise to hostile as well as friendly relations. Families united to form clans, and clans united to form tribes, but it very often happened that families fought with families, clans with clans, and tribes with tribes. Then everything that is cruel in human nature had an opportunity to express itself. Opponents were slain, old men, women, and children were killed or captured, and property was destroyed and booty taken. But such conflicts were religious wars, for the gods of the contending parties all fought for their clients. And, like all religious wars, these were very cruel. But, one ideal inspired them all, and that was the ideal of right. Each contending group believed its cause was good; it believed it was performing the will of its god, and that was just and right. Thus it was that blood conflicts, cruel and immoral in themselves, often ministered to the development of a zeal which was instrumental in the creation of religious fervour and spiritual energy. Desires may be sharpened in various ways but when they are concentrated upon fine and noble ends their sharpness adds to their efficiency. War often quickened those same passions which empowered the soul to contemplate the deeper and more spiritual things of God. The religious poet pronounces his malediction against his enemies, because he sincerely believes them to be the enemies of his god, which is the equivalent of all that he believes to be true and

just and noble. In like manner, the warrior punishes in his enemies the opponents of his god, that is, the opponents of all that he holds to be true and just and noble. Nomadic wars were all religious and therefore ministered to religious needs and fed religious passions.

The Arabian nomads were Semites. They belonged to the same roving peoples who at a very early period had made their way into Babylonia and absorbed the religion and culture of the less virile Sumerians. In fact, that is what always happens when a more cultured people comes in contact with a less cultured people. The latter are apt to be stronger and more virile, and absorb the more civilized people, taking up their culture and civilization. The same uncultured Semites migrated to Egypt at a very early period in history and left their mark upon the civilization of that country. This they likewise did in respect to that country bordering on the eastern Mediterranean which was known as Canaan. In short, the whole ancient Biblical world had felt the impress of these Arabian Semites.

But that branch of the Arabian Semites which at present interests us is the one which over three thousand years before Christ entered into Babylonia. They took with them their own Semitic customs and manners, their hereditary traits, and their environmental characteristics. They came in contact with an ancient people, the Sumerians, and an ancient culture. With the passage of many generations, and as the result of free intermarriage, the people of the

Tigris-Euphrates valley gradually became Semitic in type, but Sumerian in culture. Sumerian religion, art, science, literature, and commerce were adopted by the Semites. The Sumerians had developed a thorough system of business transactions. Their ledgers and other business accounts that have been preserved prove them to have developed business in a remarkably modern way. They had already organized and perfected a remarkable script; they had developed the science of astronomy considerably; their works of art, in the form of statues, bas-reliefs, carving, seal engraving, and inlaid work are comparable with the art of any country or age; and their religious ideas, though polytheistic, were remarkable for their moral content as well as for their deep insight into the inner spiritual relationship between man and divinity. To all this the invading Semitic nomads fell heir. Yes, this and much more. A study of the family and social life of the Sumerians reveals a remarkable and highly developed civilization. The controlling element in family and social life was the conception of justice. While the father was head of the family, and the *patesi*, or priest-king, head of the state, each member of the family and each citizen had his definite rights, and these were guaranteed by the justice of the gods, and its administration by the judges and priests of the community. Thus the Semitic Babylonians, long before two thousand before Christ, had come into, and further developed, a civilization which was highly organized and exceedingly efficient. Out of the numerous small and contending city-states of



early times had grown a great united country which was called Babylonia.

But it is along religious lines that we observe the most remarkable developments in ancient Babylonia. In earlier times each family or clan or town had its own god or pantheon. But according as political organization developed, and power became centralized, so there was a tendency towards religious unity. From time to time such cities as Lagash, Umma, Kish, became predominantly powerful, and in consequence the god of Lagash, Umma, or Kish assumed corresponding power. And so it was that about 2400 B.C., when the city of Ur became great and was made the capital of a strong dynastic house, the god of Ur, namely, the moon-god, Sin, became correspondingly great. Now, Sin was a desert and nomadic god, *par excellence*. And, because Ur was near the border of the desert, we may be sure that the Semitic strain was stronger in Ur than in farther eastern towns. Consequently Sin was a great favourite with the inhabitants of Ur and the surrounding country. So much so that, as in other similar instances, there arose a strong tendency to monotheistic thinking. In other words, the devout citizens of the country of Ur tended more and more to imagine Sin as the only god and other deities as mere manifestations of his attributes. At any rate Sin was considered the greatest of all gods, and his worshippers became very jealous for his rights.

Now, before 2000 B. C. Ur acquired a rival in the mighty city of Babylon and by 2100 B. C. the splen-

dour of that city, under its great king Hammurabi, completely overshadowed Ur. Naturally, Babylon's god, Marduk, became correspondingly great and at first rivalled Sin and later overshadowed him. The result was that many of the more religious minds who had begun to grasp the idea of monotheism were disappointed to see a rival to Sin who could not be considered as a mere shadow of Sin. They were offended and accused their fellow-countrymen, who recognized Marduk, of gross polytheism—or, at least, of unfaithfulness to their natural god.

If early Jewish traditions are reliable, it was about this time, that is, about 2100 B. C., that the person to whom all Hebrews trace their racial line was living in Babylonia. They called him Abraham, or the exalted father, that is, the father of the race. He was born in Babylonia, and his home city was Ur, or, less likely, Harran. His ancestors were those Arabian Semites who had made their way into the Tigris-Euphrates valley and had amalgamated with the Sumerians. Abraham was, perhaps, among those zealous citizens of Ur who were offended at the rising power of Marduk, and the desertion of the worshippers of Sin, for was not Sin the true Semitic and nomadic god? In fact, Abraham, who was undoubtedly a leader among his people, decided not to tolerate the defection from Sin, and, summoning as many followers as possible, took leave of settled life in Babylonia, determined to go back into the desert home of his nomadic god. He was so sure of the wisdom of his step that he described his decision as an answer to

an appeal from his god. His deep religious nature, his keen spiritual insight, his unfailing higher instinct, interpreted his move as a divinely inspired and guided one. He heard God speak to him and he knew that God told him to leave Ur of the Chaldees, a land of idolatry and country of growing polytheism, and seek out a country which could be wholly his and his god's. Abraham had the faith of perfect obedience; he heard and obeyed.

In Abraham's home, a god may have had many titles, descriptive of his abode or nature. There were mountain gods, and river gods, gods of war and gods of love. The god of Ur, Abraham's home, was the moon-god. But he was also a desert or nomadic god, and the chief characteristic of a desert or nomadic god is that he is ever-present. The moon was ever-present guiding, protecting, inspiring. It would be natural that Abraham should call his god, Sin, by some name that would indicate this characteristic since he was about to become a wandering nomad as his fathers were before him. And so whatever may have been the word used by Abraham in reference to Sin to express this characteristic, later Hebrew tradition was not far wrong in assuming that the word was, at least, the equivalent of the third person, singular, masculine, of that form of a verb which expresses continuous action, state, or condition, whether in the past, present, or future. And that word is *Yehyeh*, or *Yahweh*, or as we say, *Jehovah*. And it means, "he was, he is, and he will be". And, here, Abraham, that religious genius, that man of limitless faith, that

hero of deep spiritual insight, the ideal ancestor of the Hebrew race, had an idea, expressed by an appropriate word, which was boundless in possibilities, big enough and rich enough to contain the highest conception of godhead, the deepest spiritual thoughts, and the keenest moral distinctions. A god who was and is and will be, the ever-existing one, the ever-pervading personality—such a conception was a miracle in thought, capable, indeed, of being appreciated only imperfectly at that early period by perhaps only Abraham himself. At least, the family of Abraham and his nearer adherents had only the faintest conception of the richness and fullness of the meaning of this divine name.

But Abraham knew enough, his faith was strong enough, and he was leader enough to go forth, knowing not whither he went, but certain that his god would direct his footsteps into the right way. He was on the trail again, as his fathers before him, and he would "carry on" come what may. Of course, his venture represented another Semitic nomadic movement, such as had often taken place. But he was different from all others in that he represented a mighty civilization and culture; he was a Babylonian patrician, and, what was more, he was an educated and deeply religious leader, who was not beginning a blind nomadic wandering, but was determined to follow his god, knowing that he was to be led to a place where he could worship his god, and him alone.

What happened to this man of culture and religion for the first months or even years after his departure

from Ur we are unable to say. Tradition picks him up again in Damascus, where he must have sojourned sometime and where he procured a trusty servant. At any rate, if the etymology may be relied upon, Abraham and his followers were the first *'eberim*, "crossers over", "Hebrews". They had crossed over from Babylonia and were now in Canaan, a Semitic country, and a land of Semitic, Egyptian, and Hittite culture and civilization. As early as Lugal-zag-gi-si, king of Umma, about twenty-eight hundred years before Christ, and over seven hundred years before Abraham's own time, Babylonia and her civilization had begun to influence the land of Canaan. And this influence grew in volume as the centuries passed. But even earlier than Lugal-zag-gi-si, at least by one hundred and eighty years, Snefru of the third Egyptian dynasty had opened up commerce with Canaan and had brought there the rich culture of Egypt, and the magic influence of that ancient land never left Canaan until it was thoroughly permeated. Of Hittite influence less is as yet known, although it is certain that a rich culture had developed north of Canaan and had spread south as far as what was later southern Palestine. Therefore, Abraham, the cultured, learned, and religious Babylonian, felt himself reasonably at home in Canaan in spite of Egyptian and Hittite influence. And even these were not altogether foreign, since they themselves were partly Semitic.

However, Abraham never really settled down in the land of Canaan. Tradition has it that his first stop-

ping place in Canaan was Shechem. But we really have very little information about the great Hebrew that can be called historical. Of course he must have lived somewhere, and later tradition connects him with the oak of Moreh. But it does so for religious reasons. For, really, the sacred writer is primarily interested in religious and spiritual affairs. He is writing a religious history of his race. Of course, Abraham, the first great Hebrew, the great religious genius of his race, stopped at sacred Shechem. And there Jehovah, the ever-existent one, appeared to him and promised to him and to his descendants the whole of this beautiful country. That is why, the sacred writer would argue, we are here to-day. We are Abraham's children and his seed and heirs. And Abraham built an altar, a Babylonian one, such as he had often seen at home. And he offered sacrifices to his nomad god. He thanked him from his heart that he had safely guided him to this lovely country, and now he could worship him, and him alone. And so Shechem was forever sacred, for it was under the ancient terebinth of Shechem that Jehovah appeared to Abraham, and all the religious and spiritual sentiment of a deeply religious race centered about that sacred spot.

Thence Abraham went to Bethel, the very house of God, and there he also sacrificed to Jehovah, and that is one of the reasons why Bethel is so sacred and beloved. It and Shechem are the everlasting memorials of God's dealings with his chosen people. But Abraham had not yet satisfied himself as to a definite

place of abode. He next went to Egypt. He wanted to see that ancient land of romance of which he had heard in Babylonia. Here was an opportunity for the sacred writer to show the greatness of his mighty ancestor, for Abraham's god went with him and magnified him in the presence of the king of Egypt. On his return from Egypt his magnanimous nature is illustrated, so we are told, by his action in choosing his home. Lot, his nephew, is with him and to him he gives the choicest portions of the land of Canaan, and Abraham took the less promising lands for himself and settled in Hebron. Whether he actually did settle there or no is of minor importance. The sacred writer desires only to connect him with the holy town of Hebron, where there was an ancient terebinth under which Abraham set up his altar to Jehovah. We are reading tradition, and religious tradition, and we should not be surprised if we find that emphasis is placed upon only religious interests. The sacred writer's task was to show the patriarch's continual association with God, and his ever-consciousness in his presence.

In contrast to Abraham's magnanimity Lot's selfishness bears its own fruit, and the sacred writer takes occasion to prove the sinfulness of selfishness by telling the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. But meanwhile he has recorded Jehovah's favour towards Abraham by telling the story of the Promise. This was an idea dear to the Hebrew heart. He glowed with spiritual pride whenever he thought of the way in which Jehovah guided, guarded, and blessed Abra-

ham, and in him he blessed the whole Jewish race. Abraham was childless, but nothing is impossible with God. And although Abraham's loyalty to Jehovah was rewarded by numerous descendants of the desert, sons of Ishmael, Jehovah poured his richest blessing upon Isaac, Abraham's own son. Through him the divine promise was to be richly fulfilled. Throughout all these stories the sacred writer manifests his belief in the reality of God and his every-day dealings with man. Jehovah appears either himself or in the form of an angelic being, and works for man and blesses him.

With a burning zeal for Jehovah there is bound up in the sacred writer's heart a national love which approaches fanaticism. Moab and Ammon are akin to Israel, but they worship other gods. It is, consequently, just as natural to record disreputable stories about their birth as it is to punish Abimelech for the violation of a prophet's (Abraham's) property. Abimelech, as well as Moab and Ammon, was outside the pale of Israel, and consequently outside the sphere of Jehovah's beneficent jurisdiction. This was a limitation, but it belonged to the age. Morals and religion were strictly national. But within the borders of Israel the idea of divine justice, love, and mercy had attained to a very high state of perfection. There, the idea, natural to ancient peoples, that the best one possessed was not too good for his god, was modified and tempered by the growing idea of God's mercy. It was formerly considered the height of piety to sacrifice, on a great occasion, one's firstborn.



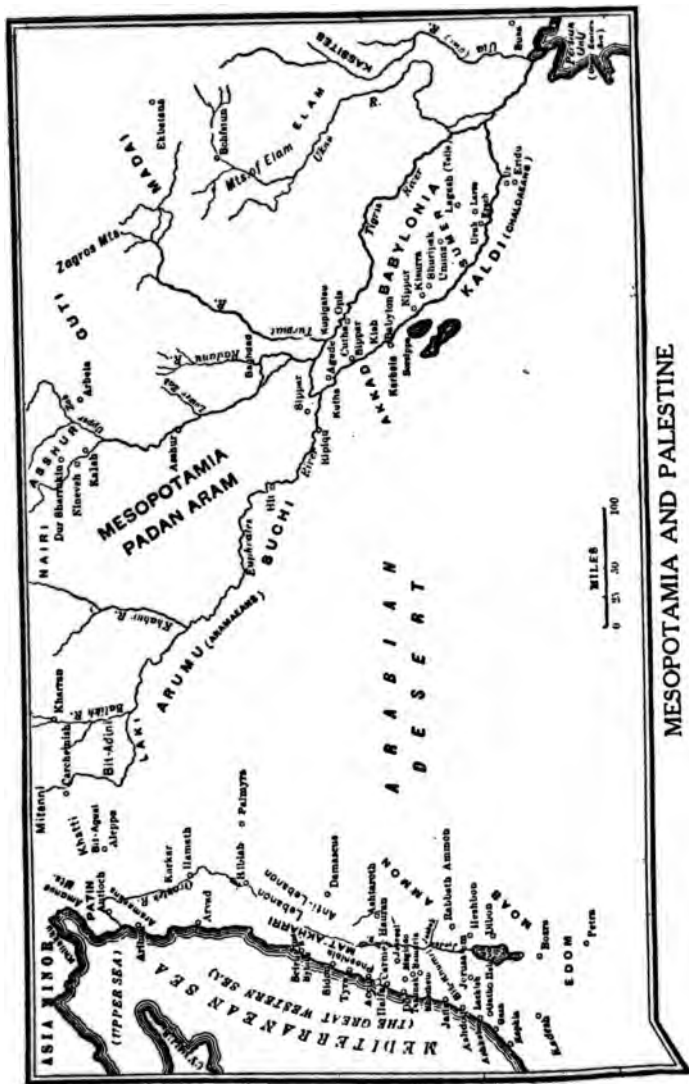
But this was all changed when man's insight into the true character of God grew deeper and richer. God does not require human sacrifice, and so the sacred writer tells how Jehovah revealed his will on this subject as early as the time of Abraham. Again, whether God actually did so or no, that is, whether human sacrifice was considered wrong as early as the time of Abraham or no, the important point is that the sacred writer's ideal for early Israel would not let it be otherwise.

Our present ideals are always projected into the past. If it were not so this life would be dreary indeed. What true American does not love to think and dream about Colonial days, and, uniting with his English cousin, does not try to live over again the days of the Fairie Queene, of Richard Coeur de Lion, or of the noble King Arthur? Even so the Israelite, though burdened by Babylonian bondage, loved to sit in imagination with Abraham at the tent door or stroll with Isaac and Rebekah at eventide or tend the flocks and roam the hills with Jacob and Esau. How well he has expressed himself in his stories about the betrothal of Isaac and Rebekah and about the life and experiences of Jacob and Esau! But in these latter, again, there comes out that intense national love and foreign discrimination. Esau is Edom. There was never very much love lost between Edom and Israel. The virus of Israel's later hatred for Edom comes out very clearly in these stories in Genesis, projections of later thought into earlier history.

After Esau is placed in his proper historical framework, according to the sacred writer, Jacob, that is, Israel, comes in for a characteristically ideal treatment. Jacob is not a schemer but the true son of his noble grandfather. Jehovah appears to him in vision and he becomes Jehovah's servant. How beautifully, and with what deep spiritual understanding, all this is told in the thirty-second chapter of Genesis! Jacob is Jehovah's chosen one because he has proven himself worthy of God's confidence in him. His was not a perfect character from the beginning. There were meanness and cunning. But spiritual struggle was victorious and there resulted a sea of glass mingled with fire, a character made perfect through trial and suffering. It was the doctrine of the prophets. Israel broke his covenant with Jehovah; she went astray and followed false gods; and she was punished by the rod of the oppressor. But her captivity was turned, and Israel, scourged and purged, became Jehovah's servant and his Messiah.

There is no reason to doubt the historicity of Israel's bondage in Egypt. The tradition was persistent and is undoubtedly well founded. But we are told very little about it. Nor did the sacred writer care overmuch. So far as we know, he may actually have had more details at hand. It was not his purpose to chronicle barren events. He viewed the past through religious glasses. The Egyptian captivity was nothing to be proud of. Tradition had it that the Israelites were slaves in that far-off land. They were enslaved because they had sinned against God.

That is what interested the sacred writer. Consequently, we have in the Joseph stories one of the most penetrating treatments of deceit and fraternal faithlessness known to any literature. Israel was enslaved in Egypt because of its sin, and Joseph was the instrument whereby Jehovah taught his people the priceless lesson of his divine over-ruling and providence. Jehovah used the sin of Joseph's brethren to teach them his power to help and guide and deliver under all circumstances. Thus it was that the sacred writer saw in Israel's greatest national sorrow an illustration of God's dealings with his people. And he made a personal application of the fact, recounting traditional details with a view to teaching religious truth. And so, in Egypt, the curtain falls upon the first act of the immortal drama of Jehovah's relations with his chosen people and of God's punishment of sin and reward of truth and faithfulness.



MESOPOTAMIA AND PALESTINE

## CHAPTER II

### THE INFANCY OF ISRAEL

Infancy, the years from birth to eight, is the period of myth and story, when everything is real and in the present and when no questions are asked about the future. It is the time when deep impressions are made and when object lessons alone are valued. It is the age of imagination, that priceless, God-given gift which grown-ups so often neglect—that power of becoming blind to inconvenient realities and of being aware of only those things that appeal and please. The child who plays with a piece of tin as if it were the sword of Wellington or Washington, with a rag as if it were a national banner, with a broomstick as if it were a war-steed, or in a barn-yard as if it were the court of a Zenobia or Victoria—that child has imagination. Imagination is the power of idealization, enkindled by enthusiasm. Imagination was the compelling force which made Israel-in-bonds conscious of herself.

How long Israel remained in Egypt is impossible to say with certainty. Tradition has it that they were there four hundred or four hundred and thirty years. It is, however, fairly well established that during

the reign of Rameses II the Hebrews in Egypt were oppressed. The new king, "who knew not Joseph", was a great builder. Among his creations were two fortresses on the eastern border of the land of Goshen, where, we presume, the Israelites had their home. In the building of these towns the Hebrews were forced to labour. But oppression and force are the parents of unrest. Rameses was quick to see that trouble was brewing and gave orders to control the birth-rate of the Hebrew boys. With this expedient is connected the story of the birth and rescue of Moses, the sacred writer seeing in the word *mosheh* a derivative of the Hebrew word *mashah*, to draw out. In reality, however, "Moses" is an Egyptian word meaning "that which is born" or "child". This with the Egyptian colouring of the whole account of the period of the Exodus points to the substantial historicity of the account as it has been handed down to us. Moses was, and was born and brought up, in Egypt, and the Israelites were in bondage in that country. That is historical and of prime importance. But whether Moses was saved from drowning, in the way in which our story has it, in view of a very similar story told long before of the Babylonian Sargon I, we cannot substantiate, nor is it of great historical importance.

Of the boyhood of Moses we know nothing. The sacred writer leads us directly from the time of his birth and rescue to that of his young manhood, and the incident he relates marks the turning point of Moses' career. Although Moses was born and reared

in Egypt his heart remained a Hebrew heart, and so when "he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew . . . he smote the Egyptian and hid him in the sand". On hearing this Rameses "sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian." In Midian Moses came into contact with his own, though distant, relatives. Jethro (otherwise Hobab or Reuel) was a Midianite, a descendant of Abraham, and in him Moses found a ready assistant in his plans to liberate his people. For this is what the young fugitive determined to do. Nor was the time inopportune, for after some years spent with Jethro, Moses learned that Rameses II was dead and that a weak son, Merneptah, had succeeded him. He learned also that Mediterranean peoples were invading Egypt and pressing into the country by the way of the eastern Delta. And he also knew that his own people in Egypt were growing restless and beseeching God to deliver them. The Hebrews were at the restless age. Motion was imperative. Circumstances compelled them into activity.

Out in Midian, too, forces were working towards Israel's liberation. Moses dreamed day and night of the coming time when he would feel himself strong enough to demand the release of his kinsfolk from Egyptian bondage. He had learned much from Jethro—much about his ancestral home and god, the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now, one day when Moses was with his flock in Horeb, the mountain of his god, there appeared unto him a divine being who declared himself to be none other than

Jehovah, the ever-existent one, the same who had led Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, and who was now ready to deliver his people from Egypt. It was indeed a great moment for Moses—the moment for which his whole life seemed to be prepared. It was indeed Jehovah who appeared unto him, for Moses asked him of his name and the divine one pronounced the sacred word, his memorial unto all generations. It was the same god whom Moses in Egypt worshipped as El Shaddai, but who now revealed himself as willing and able to deliver Israel.

Jehovah, Abraham's god and the god of Moses, with words of irresistible might, now outlined his commission to Moses, furnishing him with certain signs and promises whereby he would ever be conscious of Jehovah's actual presence. Armed with Jehovah's assurance, consumed with burning zeal, conscious of his high mission, and accompanied by Aaron, his brother, Moses returned, after many years, to Egypt to take up his great and important task. Nor did he fear to carry his mission to the royal palace itself. There he met the pharaoh himself and declared in no uncertain words his absolute conviction that Jehovah, the god of Israel, purposed to free his people from the pharaoh's domains. At first the pharaoh stoutly refused to be moved by the confident enthusiasm of Moses. Moses reported to Jehovah and Jehovah renewed his promise and assurance. Still the pharaoh refused to let the people go, and there began that remarkable series of events which, the sacred writer was given to understand, served to



impress upon the mind of the Egyptian king the irresistible power of Jehovah. The king was duly impressed and in alarm for the safety of his own household besought the people of Jehovah to depart.

The details of this picture of the way in which Israel delivered herself from Egypt may be highly coloured. The story may even be described as highly symbolical, but the important factor in it all is that the Hebrew historian, looking back upon the past history of his race and relating the deliverance of his people from a degrading servitude in a foreign country, ascribed the deliverance to Jehovah his god. It was his mighty hand and outstretched arm that saved Israel. When they were in need they called upon him and he heard them. The details are of secondary importance. The great central fact is that Israel had been held in captivity in Egypt and their rescue was due to Jehovah's intervention. And, consequently, the Hebrews for ever after looked back upon the event as a great turning point in their career. So much so, in fact, that the origin of their most sacred feast, the Passover, was ascribed to that time and that event. In reality, however, the Passover was an ancient Hebrew or Semitic rite much older than the Exodus, which was celebrated by the Israelites as they were about to take their leave of Egypt, being the most appropriate vehicle of expressing their gratitude to their god. But the later historians ascribed the origin of the fully developed feast of the Passover compounded with the Canaanitish Feast of Unleav-

ened Bread to the time of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

Then began the exit from Egypt. Whether all the tribes were actually in Egypt, and, if they were, whether they all left at the same time, is of secondary importance. The chief consideration is that the sojourn in Egypt was a captivity due to sin committed, and the deliverance was wrought by Jehovah through his mercy. The sacred writer keeps this fact ever in the foreground. Jehovah meant it for good and not for evil that Israel was in bondage in Egypt, and the same Jehovah delivered them from the pharaoh and went before them in all their wanderings.

The exodus began most likely at Rameses and their first stopping place the departing Israelites called Succoth, for there they set up their tents. Failure to escape was out of the question, for Jehovah was with them. When they came to the Yom Suf, probably Lake Timsah, not the Red Sea, a heavy north wind was blowing, which caused the shallow water of the northern end of the lake to recede from the surface of the sand for quite a considerable distance southward. Over this damp packed-in sand the Hebrews crossed on foot. But in it the heavy wheels of the pursuing Egyptian cavalry sank and the Israelites were thus enabled to escape. Of course, Jehovah delivered them. Jehovah separated the waters and he overthrew the Egyptians. An enthusiastic Westerner would say so, let alone an Oriental with his vivid imagination and exaggerated methods of expression. Jehovah delivered his people and the pharaoh and his

host were cast off at Lake Timsah. The Egyptians turned back in discouragement and Israel was free.

The Hebrews were again free nomads. The world was before them and their fortune was in the future. But Moses, their leader, had definite plans in mind. He wanted to lead his people back to the land of his forefathers, the land of Canaan. With this in view his journey would be as direct as circumstances would permit. But circumstances had to be considered. The coast-road leading into southern Canaan by way of Philistia was impossible because the Hebrews on foot could be cut off by Egyptian soldiers transported by ship from Egypt to Philistia. Moreover the country which was now beginning to be called Philistia was in an unsettled state because of the arrival of foreigners whose early home was Crete and who were later called Philistines. The journey south on the eastern side of the Red Sea to the southern end of the peninsula must be considered most unlikely. Such a route would have led them into the very mouth of Egyptian soldiers who were guarding the mines of Sinai. It is true that Mount Sinai is located on our maps at the southern end of the so-called peninsula of Sinai, but there is no convincing evidence to prove that that is its true location. In fact such passages as Judges 5: 4-5 and Deut. 33: 2 would lead one to believe that the location of Sinai or Horeb (different names for the same mountain) was in the Seir range, probably near Elath, at the extreme north of the Gulf of Akabah. The route, then, which Moses took was the ancient highway across the peninsula, and his

immediate objective was some such place as Kadesh, whence he could turn northward and enter Canaan from the south. That this was his intention and that he actually made the attempt one can readily deduce from the following considerations: Shortly after pitching their tents at Kadesh the Israelites were brought into conflict with the Amalekites, who lived in southern Canaan, and who immediately disputed the passage of the Hebrews through their lands. The spies sent into Canaan by Moses penetrated as far as Rehoboth, Beersheba, and Hebron, and had as their object the investigation of the country with a view to conquest. They reported that the land was very barren and southern Canaan was well fortified, but in spite of that some of the Hebrews probably made the attempt and remained in what was later southern Judah; such were the Calebites and the Kenizzites. But Moses and the bulk of his followers gave up the idea of penetrating into Canaan through the south lands.

After this Moses and some at least of his countrymen went eastward to the home of Jethro in the vicinity of Sinai. And there it was again that Moses had one of those great religious experiences which fired him with zeal and inspired him with undying faith in Jehovah. On the top of Sinai, at a time when all nature, perhaps an earthquake accompanied by volcanic action, conspired to solemnize the event, Moses was "caught up in spirit" into the very presence of God. To him his experience was a reality. Jehovah appeared to him and confirmed his efforts. At Kadesh

and in communion with his priestly father-in-law, Moses had had time to plan for the organization of his numerous followers into a compact whole. He collected and put in form their religious traditions, and systematized their religious rites and ceremonies. He selected leaders from among the people and assigned definite duties to them. And, finally, he collected the decisions and customs of his people and organized them into legal form. With all this done, he went up into Sinai to consecrate himself and his work to Jehovah. And there in the presence of God he became deeply conscious of the fact that he was but an instrument in God's hands. The best that he had ever done was God's work; these laws which he had codified were given through him to his people by God himself. And as they stood there—the laws—engraved upon two tables of stone, Moses beheld in them the work of the very finger of God. It was Jehovah who had inscribed these stones, for all things come from him. These ten words, in their original and unexpanded form, were divine and became for ever after the Magna Charta of the Hebrew race, and, through them, of the Christian world.

At Kadesh many years were spent, perhaps as many as thirty-eight or thirty-nine. And there the disjointed Hebrew tribes were welded by Moses and his seventy elders into a compact whole. Many things happened there. Among them undoubtedly was the indelible mark which the overmastering religious character of Moses made upon them. He was a man of God who saw deeper into the realities of the divine

nature than any of his contemporaries, and some small part of that vision he succeeded in imparting to many of his followers. At any rate, the impress of Moses upon the religious thought of Israel was permanent. Some deeds ascribed to this period, such as the building of an elaborate tabernacle, were due to historic idealization. But beyond these, sufficient happened at Kadesh to make it and the events which transpired there one of the great turning points in the spiritual history of Israel. It was there Israel had her birth as a nation. It was there that Moses translated his spiritual experiences into living realities. It was there that Jehovah, the righteous God, became the national deity of Israel. And it was there that Jehovah and Israel made their everlasting covenant, Jehovah freely choosing Israel from among all the nations of the earth, and Israel freely taking Jehovah as her God. Henceforth none other god than the Lord Jehovah was her God.

But the Israelites must move on. Their destiny was the promised land, the land of Canaan. Unable to enter from the south, rebuffed by Edom with its well-fortified towns, and repulsed by the barren plains of Moab, the Israelites made a sweeping detour around the southern end of Mount Seir and then turned northward along the border of the desert. But before they reached their goal many things were to happen. At Mount Hor, Aaron, the brother and companion of Moses, died and his son Eleazer succeeded him in the priestly office. Then came the death of Miriam, the famous sister of Moses, and the

sacred writer gives us a glimpse here and there into the every-day life of the wanderers. Moses and those nearer to him were buoyed up by the living presence of their great religious experiences, but the tedium of the long, hard journey bore heavily upon the patience of the ordinary Israelite, and he often looked back with longing glances to the flesh-pots of Egypt and the comforts of settled life.

The actual route of the Israelites northward, east of Edom and Moab, is uncertain, except that a few places like Maan are identified as stopping-points along the great highway from the south to Damascus. It is, however, certain that it was from the banks of the Arnon that the Hebrews set out for the conquest of the Amorite kingdom of Sihon. A decisive battle was fought near Jahaz, and then they set out for Heshbon, Sihon's capital city. This was soon surrendered and it became the capital of the first Israelitish state. It was one of those spots where the wandering Israelites loved to loiter. Situated on a mountain, in a fruitful region, nearly three thousand feet above the sea, Heshbon provided the necessary atmosphere for bracing the Hebrews for their final great drive towards the land of Canaan. But before passing to that important stage of their journey the sacred writer records how they had overawed Moab. Israel's war-like qualities were now fairly well-known, but her zeal for her god had made an even deeper impression upon the king and people of Moab. So much so, in fact, that Balak determined to fight religious zeal with religious weapons, and, therefore, called upon Balaam, a

famous magician, to use his charms against Israel. And here again we see the idealism of Israel cropping out. What the details of the actual story of Balak and Balaam were we are unable to reconstruct, but it is of prime importance to note that the later Israelites looked back upon this event as an instance of Jehovah's supremacy away back in those early days. Balaam was powerful with all the power of Babylon's magic, but even he was quick to recognize the futility of his magic upon Jehovah. Whom Jehovah blessed he was blessed and no magic was capable of revoking it. Israel was Jehovah's chosen people and Jehovah would protect her.

At last the time was ripe for Israel's great adventure. Canaan was prepared to welcome her new guests. Babylonia was in a state of decline, Assyria had not yet gained that power which later was hers, and Egypt was suffering a period of complete anarchy under the weak Ramesids. Canaan was left alone, anarchy was rampant, and a branch of the "sea-peoples" of Crete was forcing its way into the beauty spots of the land. Canaan was ready to receive her guests, and especially as they were relatives, though distant ones. Israel was ready and desirous of taking the next step. In fact, there were some impelling reasons why she wanted to do so as quickly as possible. In her rear the roving Arabs were coming up and pressing steadily westward. So with pressure from the east, the call of the west, and Jehovah's impelling promise, Israel longed to set her foot upon that land



which had been prepared for her through the long ages.

At the heart of Israel was her great prophetic leader, Moses. He was her great dynamo, the source of her strength, the well-spring of her inspiration. An entrance into the promised land could not have been well conceived without the presence of Moses—that strong and calm and lofty personality, the personification of all that was good and true and efficient and noble in Israel. But the fact remains that Moses did not lead the children of Israel into the land of Canaan. On Mount Nebo, the summit of the Pisgah range, in lonely Moab, Moses died, and was buried in the still, quiet valley over against Beth-Peor. Later tradition was at pains to explain the failure of Moses to accompany his people to their ideal. And true to its instinct an explanation was not far to seek. Had Moses been perfect Jehovah would not have denied him this great privilege. But because he was denied it, it was necessary to locate the cause, and the cause was sin. Moses was a strong, great leader of men, but like most such men he was sometimes impatient and impetuous. At the waters of Meribah of Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, Moses and Aaron had failed to “sanctify Jehovah in the midst of the children of Israel”, therefore Jehovah said unto Moses when he took him to the top of Pisgah, opposite Jericho, to show him the promised land: “This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed; I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt

not go over thither". This was an overwhelming blow to Moses; his dearest hope was blighted. It was the due reward of sin. However, the great man took his sentence with resignation, nor did he falter in his faith in Jehovah, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated", which is to say, he was gathered to his fathers in a sure and certain hope of Jehovah's forgiveness and blessing, with a belief that he had done his best, and with a faith in Jehovah's unfailing justice and mercy.

Moses was not left without an able successor. "Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him". He was ready to carry out the commands which Jehovah had given to Moses. So after the burial of Moses he began at once to prepare for the crossing of the Jordan. This was to be a great event. Even greater than the crossing of the "Red Sea". And so later tradition and imagination were busy in supplying the details which history has failed to preserve. That the children of Israel did cross the Jordan there is no doubt. But whether they crossed all at once, or all at the same place, or in what manner they crossed cannot now be determined with full satisfaction because the details of the event were never remembered. The later Hebrew loved to look back at the crossing of the Jordan as one of the great events in the past history of his race. In such events the hand of Jehovah was always present. When all things were ready, Joshua at the head of his hosts, the priests in charge of the sacred ark, and the soldiers in battle array, the march

began. When they arrived at the Jordan, the priests that bare the ark entered the waters which, as soon as the feet of the priests touched them, were cut off and stood in a heap. Out of the bed of the river were taken twelve stones, a proof that the children of Israel had passed over on dry ground, and they were set up as a perpetual memorial. Then the sacred rite of Circumcision was renewed, the Passover was observed, and Jehovah's promise was fulfilled.

The commonest attempt to explain the crossing of the Jordan reminds us of the landslide of 1267 A. D., and bids us compare like phenomena in connection with the Missouri. The Israelites were encamped on the eastern bank of the Jordan awaiting a suitable time for crossing. A violent storm arose which flooded the rapid river of the Jordan, the mighty "descender". The flood was so violent as to cause the river to break its banks and take an easterly course. In the morning succeeding the storm the children of Israel beheld the river flowing eastward of them and they were standing on the new banks of the river on the Canaan side. The thing to them was a veritable miracle. It was none other than the work of Jehovah. Later elaboration of the event pictured the crossing as we have it in the Book of Joshua.

Exactly when the crossing took place no one at present knows. The generally accepted opinion, however, is that it must have taken place about 1190 or 1180 B. C. If Rameses II be considered the Pharaoh of the Oppression, then Merneptah, his son, must

have been the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Now, Merneptah began to reign about 1225. But in the third year of the reign of Merneptah his forces defeated "Israel", among others, in the land of Canaan. However, this is not an argument against the time of Merneptah as that of the Exodus, for it will be recalled that from Kadesh portions of the Israelites penetrated into the south of Canaan and remained there. These most likely were the Israelites whom the soldiers of Merneptah defeated in Canaan. So soon as the Israelites had escaped from Egypt, Merneptah set out in pursuit. He failed to catch them at the "Red Sea", and consequently sent troops to meet them in Canaan, for he knew they were headed in that direction. The fact that Merneptah's soldiers encountered Israelites in Canaan is one of the best proofs that the Children of Israel did not go south to the foot of the peninsula, but so soon as they had crossed the "Red Sea" they set out for the nearest point whence they could enter Canaan. Taking, then, the first or second year of Merneptah's reign as the date of the Exodus, and about forty years as the period of the wanderings, the date of the crossing of the Jordan would be somewhere between 1190 and 1180 B. C. This date would agree excellently with the time of the entrance of the Philistines in Canaan and of the disturbed condition of the whole country.

Thus from her birth as a nation, shortly after the departure from Egypt, Israel passed through all the experiences of infancy. Her period of restlessness was succeeded by a period of intense activity, when

she grew in faith and trust, in dependence upon and consciousness of Jehovah, and in the imagination of greater things for the future. Her experience from the time she left Egypt until her crossing of the Jordan made a deep and lasting impression upon her. She never afterwards forgot it. During that period she became a nation, and she established an everlasting covenant with a God of justice and mercy. In later days this period became a golden era. It was idealized and coloured by the best that Israel knew. Actually, it was a period of beginnings; ideally, the seeds which later grew and developed were imagined already full blown. In reading the only extant accounts of the period of the exodus and wanderings we often search in vain for actual contemporaneous information, but we are doubly rewarded by the rich religious and moral colouring which later Israel loved to project back into her early history and the beginning of her devotion to Jehovah, her God. Legend and history blend in giving us an ideal picture of Israel's youth laden with all its hope and faith, its desires and ambitions, its aspirations and inspirations, its vision of the kingdom that must be built.



## CHAPTER III

### THE CHILDHOOD OF ISRAEL

Childhood, between eight and twelve, is the period when a liking for biography and history begins to develop. The careless and fearless spirit of childhood feeds on the deeds of the past, and creates for itself an elaborate hero-worship. It loves to read and to be told about the life and adventures of others. During the pre-adolescent period the child seeks his kind and tends towards cliques and groups. It is the period when the memory is exceedingly active and powerful.

All these characteristics of human childhood are manifest also in the childhood of a race. From the time of the entrance into the land of Canaan until the establishment of the kingdom, Israel was in its childhood and experienced all the characteristics of that stage of life. There was a careless and fearless spirit abroad; hero-worship was rampant; there was a feeling of the necessity of grouping together against the common foe; and there was a harking back to deeds of the past and of past heroes, which characterize the boy or girl of the pre-adolescent age.

As the sacred writer looked back from the vantage point of many centuries he saw in this period one of

the most important in the whole history of Israel. He consequently filled it with an expression of his faith in the ever-present and active guidance and deliverance of Jehovah. It was by the hand of Jehovah that the waters of the Jordan were divided, and it was likewise by Jehovah's power that Canaan was gradually subdued. At least two sacred writers have left us accounts of the period under consideration. One ascribed more to the direct action of Jehovah than the other. One has represented Canaan as having been very speedily conquered and divided by lot among the Israelitish tribes, the other has steered more closely to actual facts, showing how difficult it was for Israel to gain a firm footing in the land. But both emphasize the reality of Jehovah's intervention in specific circumstances. But it is in the Book of Joshua, the less reliable, that the story of Jericho's miraculous fall occurs. Jericho was taken, and most likely by stratagem, but it took the imagination of a much later age to represent its capture in the way familiar to most readers of the Bible.

The land of Canaan now lay before the children of Israel. And a land of promise it surely was. Strategically, Palestine was the centre of the ancient world. It was a highway of nations. Through it passed all the world with ideas and opinions. And the inhabitants were quick to grasp these ideas and opinions, assimilate them, and digest them. The result was an ability to think in world terms, especially in religious matters, which is unparalleled in all history. Physically, also, Palestine is an interesting country. It is



a world in miniature. There are coast plains with the salubrious climate of southern California; lowlands, with a healthy temperate climate; the Negeb or south with its desert conditions; the wilderness on the east with all its wildness; the Jordan valley deepest of all depressions and burning with torrid heat; and the mountainous backbone of the country, which can be as cold as if it were in the frigid zone—and all this is an area not larger than the State of Vermont. These conditions account not only for that remarkable spirit of independence which was characteristic of the Hebrew people, but also for that keen insight into moral and religious thought that led them earlier than all other peoples to appreciate the necessity of a belief in the existence, power, and providence of One God.

In entering the land of Canaan, the Hebrews had but two stronger groups of people to dispose of. For while there were remnants of Hittites, Girgashites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, they were small and scattered, leaving the Canaanites or Amorites in control of the highlands, and the newly-arrived Philistines in the plains. But surrounding Palestine were several peoples who from time to time gave Israel much concern. They were the Phoenicians and Syrians in the north, and the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites on the east. However, none of these peoples were formidable. The power of Egypt and Babylonia was decadent just at this time. The Hittites were enfeebled by long struggles with Egypt, the Philistines had but recently arrived, and the Canaanites

had not yet recovered from devastating wars which foreign nations had fought out on Palestinean soil. It was an opportune time for Israel's invasion. Consequently, the conquest of Canaan was exceedingly speedy.

Shortly after crossing the Jordan, the Hebrews proceeded to an attack upon Jericho. The account of the taking of Jericho is found in the Book of Joshua but in a very idealized form. There are hints here and there of the stratagem which resulted in its capture, but the sacred writer's enthusiasm for Jehovah and his power gives us the impression that all the little army of the Hebrews had to do was to march around the city in silence for six days, then capture it with a shout and a final dash. The account of the sudden collapse of the walls of the city is a vivid figure of the sacred writer's imagination, who wished to express the ease with which Jehovah enabled his people to triumph over the heathen city. Then began the gradual conquest of the south, the centre, and the north of the country.

After a temporary defeat at Ai, which the sacred writer ascribes to the sins of Achan, Israel, represented by the peoples of Judah and Simeon, began its campaigns in the south. Ai was captured and the Gibeonites made peace with Israel. Southern Canaan became alarmed and formed a coalition with Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem, at their head. The five Canaanitish kings attacked Gibeon. The men of Gibeon sent for Joshua at Gilgal. Immediately Joshua assembled his men of war and in the battle of

Beth-horon completely defeated his foe. Again the sacred writer saw in this battle the hand of Jehovah. Joshua was God's chosen champion, and Jehovah assisted him by delivering the Canaanites into his power. So great was the slaughter of the enemy that the sacred writer quotes from the *Book of Jashar* to prove the possibility of his enthusiasm in declaring that "the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day", until the Canaanites were completely discomfited. The kings of Southern Canaan were captured in the cave of Makkedah and slain there. Thus a firm foothold was gained in the south by Judah and Simeon with the assistance of Caleb and the Kenites.

Central Palestine was attacked by the house of Joseph, that is, by Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh. Ephraim established itself at Luz, which was given the name of Bethel, and at Gezer, but Manasseh seems not to have been very successful in its attacks against the towns of Bethshean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, and Megiddo, for the Canaanites were not dispossessed.

Although the eleventh chapter of Joshua describes the defeat by Joshua of a coalition of northern kings at Merom, the account cannot be taken as literal, for the Israelites were stopped at Bethshean, Ibleam, Taanach, and Megiddo, a series of towns stretching across the plain of Esdraelon, and the account of the conquest of the north, in the Book of Judges, comes after the death of Joshua.

Joshua, the loyal servant of Moses, a brave, resourceful, and straightforward soldier, a keen strate-

gist and brilliant leader, succeeded in establishing the Israelites in southern and central Palestine, but failed to make much impression on the north. The Book of Joshua, written by an idealist, describes the division of Canaan by lot, and its presentation to the tribes of Israel. But the more prosaic, but reliable, Book of Judges is at pains to account for the failure of Israel immediately to conquer Canaan. The reasons for this failure are clearly given. The first is the apostasy of the people, their forgetfulness of Jehovah; and the second is that the Canaanites were permitted to remain in the land as a test for Israel. The fact remains that Joshua died before Canaan became Israel. In reality, the land of Canaan became the land of Israel partly by conquest but chiefly by the slow but certain absorption of the Canaanites, the weaker people, by the Hebrews, the stronger and more virile nomadic race.

The entrance of Israel in Canaan marks an important step in the development of the Hebrew people. They then passed from nomadic life to the life of settled peoples in an ancient land of culture. Politically, it put them on their metal and taught them the lesson of unity. They had to contend for every mile of territory, and this taught them endurance and perseverance. Socially, they came into contact with a highly developed and complex civilization, and broadened their vision of life and thought. Simple institutions of nomadic existence were exchanged for the complex and complicated life in towns and cities. Religiously, the settlement in Canaan taught them

toleration, sympathy, breadth, and insight, and it prepared their minds for a realization of the great thought of monotheism which, although, perhaps, perceived to some extent by Moses, had not yet made any impression upon the minds of the people.

Later generations looked back to this great event with pride. This is to be seen in the character they ascribed to Joshua, the leader of the time. Just as Jehovah was continually at the right hand of Moses, so he was ever-present with Joshua. And Joshua was the typical man of God. Some of the passages in the Book of Joshua, while not as valuable as some in Judges, so far as historicity is concerned, are far more valuable than those, because of the peep they give us into the ideals of the people of Israel. Israel loved to look back down the green slopes towards the east, to the time of her childhood; she loved to project the best she knew back into that far-off period, and she loved to think that then it was when Jehovah and his people were very near and dear to each other. Those were the days of simplicity and purity, when Jehovah and his people were verily one. In the last chapter of the Book of Joshua occurs one of these sublime passages, which reflects back into the past Israel's consciousness of her special relationship with Jehovah. After Joshua had assembled the people together at Shechem, he took a great stone and set it up in their presence by the sanctuary of Jehovah, where they had just made their solemn covenant with their God, and he said unto the people, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it hath heard

all the words of Jehovah which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness against you lest ye deny your God". What a consciousness of the reality of God's dealings with men! What a sermon there is in these mighty words! What a revelation it gives us of the inner life of this remarkable people!

The beginning of the conquest of the north was left to a woman, Deborah, of the tribe of Ephraim. There are two accounts of this campaign, one in poetry and the other in prose. The poetical account in the fifth chapter is the older and more reliable, but it and the fourth chapter give us a fairly clear idea of the culmination at the battle of Hazor of the great war of independence for the north. Deborah, a prophetess, collaborated with Barak of Kadesh-Naphtali and Zebulun against Sisera, who was perhaps the captain of Jabin's armies. The two armies met at the brook Kishon. Here Jehovah appeared at the head of the troops of Barak, and, by means of heavenly weapons, delivered the forces of Sisera into the hands of Barak and Deborah. Sisera fled to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, near Kedesh, where he was treacherously slain by his hostess. But this deed was remembered for ever after by Israel as an act of the purest patriotism and religion. The song of Deborah says of Jael:

"Blessed above women shall Jael be,  
The wife of Heber, the Kenite;  
Blessed shall she be above women in the tent."

It was the same spirit of patriotism which made a hero out of Judith in later days, and commemorated

her as the deliverer of Israel. At any rate the battle of Hazor was a political and religious victory for the children of Israel. Now the Hebrews were firmly entrenched in strategic points in south, central, and northern Palestine, were prepared to contest the rest of the country with their antagonists, and were confirmed in their confidence in Jehovah, who, although he was still thought of as dwelling on Mount Sinai, was still with them, in their midst, and fighting their battles.

From the time of Joshua to that of Samuel, twelve "judges" (thirteen, if Abimelech be counted) ruled over Israel. Seven of them are scarcely known to us—very little beyond their names being preserved. That each ruled over the whole of Israel may well be doubted. In reality, they were leaders of groups of Israelites in different parts of the country and contemporaneous to some extent. Othniel proved his worth against an attack of the Aramaeans, Ehud beat off Moab, Shamgar proved his metal against the Philistines, and Barak assisted Deborah in the war of liberation in the north. The fifth and greatest of these leaders was Gideon, who was a reformer as well as a military leader. Central Palestine was in danger of being over-run by the Midianites. Already their religious practices were uncomfortably dominant in that part of the country. The challenge of these circumstances fired the religious and patriotic zeal of this young man of Manasseh. Later tradition was busy with the character of Gideon. Not only did confusion arise as to his name, being also known as

Jerubbaal, but the idealist of later times expressed his admiration of Gideon by collecting and recording the interesting stories of the Angel's Visit and the Sign of the Fleece which are recorded in the sixth chapter of Judges. However, Gideon knew how to choose brave and valiant men and he knew how to learn the *morale* of his opponents. Accomplishing these things the defeat of the Midianites and their kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, was assured. With the country freed from the fear of the Midianites, Gideon turned his attention to religious matters, but not before the people had democratically sent a delegation to him and invited him to become king. Gideon was slow to fall in with their request. But it seems that he did, and established himself at Ophrah as his capital city. There he set up an ephod, an image of Jehovah, and there he worshipped the god of his fathers.

Politically, this is one of the most important events in Hebrew history. It is the birth of the institution of kingship. A kingdom was established under an hereditary king. Gideon and his son and his son's son were to rule in Israel. It was in answer to the call for unity and solidarity. It was due to the feeling of the necessity of a united front against common foes. But what is of so great political importance is the fact that the demand came from the people. It was a democratic movement. A democratic monarchy was established in Israel and it remained, in essence, democratic down to the very end. Of course, the idea of a monarch is in embryonic form in early times among almost all primitive peoples. The father of



the family, or the great one of the tribe, is, in reality, king. But the father is king by right, and the great one is king often by might. Nevertheless, the great one or strong man is also the natural choice of his people. It was thus natural for the people of Manasseh and probably of other tribes to choose Gideon, the man of the hour, as their strong man or king.

On the death of Gideon, his son Abimelech, by a Canaanitish woman, plotted to have himself made king. He went to Ophrah and slew all his brethren except Jotham, who escaped, and then had himself crowned king at Shechem, which he ruled through a governor, by name, Zebul. Jotham's ridicule and political campaigning were too much for Abimelech, for it resulted in a revolution headed by Gaal the son of Ebed. After three years of incessant warfare, Abimelech was killed by a millstone cast by a woman from the walls of Thebez. Thus ended the first monarchy in Israel.

The sixth and seventh "judges", Tola and Jair, are not much more than names to us. Jephthah was the eighth, and one of the greatest of these early leaders. He was a Gileadite and lived on the east of the Jordan. There his people were oppressed by the Ammonites. This he objected to and reasoned that as Ammon possessed what their god Chemosh gave them, so the Gileadites ought to be unmolested in their heritage from Jehovah. In his struggle with the Ammonites he vowed to Jehovah that whatsoever came forth from the doors of his house on his return from battle would be sacrificed to Jehovah, if Jehovah

would deliver the children of Ammon into his hand. Jephthah was successful against the Ammonites and the penalty of his vow was the sacrifice of his only daughter. In this act he was highly commended by the sacred writer, for though to us it was but the fruit of superstition, to an early Israelite it was proof of the sincerest devotion to Jehovah.

The ninth, tenth, and eleventh "judges", Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, are mere names, but the last "judge", Samson, became in later history the most famous of them all. But his fame is not due to any great political, military, or religious talents, but to the love of his time for just the kind of hero that he was. Here was a great, strong, frolicsome, over-grown boy, whose passion consisted in feats of strength and grim tricks against the most hated and feared of all Israel's enemies, the Philistines. That was enough to make him popular and afterwards famous. There was enough of the religious in his personality to appeal to the later religious historians for he was a Nazarite and practised the vows of temperance in drink and of ceremonial purity. He also kept his hair uncut. But all deeper, finer, and nobler religious traits were entirely absent from his character.

Samuel was also a Nazarite, but of a very different type. Whether he was a contemporary of Samson or not cannot be determined. At any rate, he came in a very unsettled period in the history of Israel. Israel was not only threatened from without but also from within. Bloody war had broken out between the Benjamites and the Ephraimites, in which the religious

forces of the time were involved. Unrest was abroad, and the Danites, perhaps to avoid further trouble, migrated to the extreme north of the country, to the district of Laish. Eli, the priest, was doing his utmost to stem the tide of internal strife and to beat off the Philistine attacks, but his own sons were corrupt and disaster threatened the nation. In such a time Samuel was born. But unlike Samson, everything conspired to make him a really good and great man. His father and mother, Elkanah and Hannah, were deeply religious. Before the birth of their son they vowed him to Jehovah, and as soon as he was old enough they took him and placed him in the care of the venerable and godly priest, Eli. There he remained until he grew to the great and useful manhood which was his.

According to the Book of Judges, the period of the "judges" was 410 years. But according to I Kings 6:1, 480 years intervened between the Exodus and the fourth year of the reign of Solomon. Now these same 480 years must include, beside the 410 years, on Biblical reckoning, forty years in the wilderness,  $x$  years under Joshua and the elders (Judges 2:7), forty years of Eli, twenty *plus* years of Samuel,  $y$  years of Saul, forty years of David, and four years of Solomon, a total of  $554 + x + y$  years. There is manifestly something wrong. The chances are that, as suggested above, the "judges" did not rule successively over the whole of Israel, but to a large extent contemporaneously over different parts. But an approximate date may be assigned to the close of the

period of the "judges" and the beginning of the activity of Samuel. The date of the division of the kingdom at the end of the reign of Solomon, as we shall see, is pretty certainly 937. Solomon is said to have reigned forty years, David forty, and Samuel ruled about twenty years. If about thirteen years be assigned to Saul we shall arrive at about 1050 B. C. as the date of the close of the "judges". And since we assigned about 1185 as the time of the crossing, 135 years would have to do duty for the time of Joshua and the elders and for the period of the "judges". This shorter period agrees better with the historical and religious data of the period.

By the time of Samuel the land of Canaan was far from conquered. The Ammonites, Edomites, Midianites, and Moabites were quiet. But there were large tracts of the country still in the hands of the Canaanites. There were still a series of Canaanite cities between the southern tribes of Judah and Simeon and the central tribes of Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh. The plain of Esdraelon separated the central tribes from Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, Asher, and Dan in the north. A fourth group of tribes had never located permanently west of the Jordan, namely, Reuben, Gad, and part of Manasseh. Moreover, the Philistines held the coast plain and were becoming more and more aggressive. But the Hebrews had begun to cherish and develop a sense of unity and had already showed that they could collaborate when they had to do so. They were also becoming more and more accustomed to their new mode of life, and had

learned a great deal socially from the higher culture of the Canaanites. Morally, they were still rather a crude and ambitious people, eager for new homes and ready to capture them. They were suspicious of other peoples and did not hesitate to practise all kinds of deceit, revenge, and cruelty upon them. Religiously, they were thoroughly loyal to Jehovah, their own god, but were ready to commit any evil provided they thought it was his will. They borrowed many Canaanitish excesses in their ritual and became more fanatical as the contest between the Baalim and Yahweh grew fiercer. On the other hand, the way was being prepared for further progress. There was not lacking here and there a true Israelite whose vision of the world and God was becoming ever clearer. More of the outside world was coming within the horizon of Israel. Her sympathy for other peoples, according as she came into contact with them, was quickened. She was beginning to think in international terms. The consequence of which was to relate her god in some way with the outside world. Nevertheless, along this road she had yet a long way to go. She still in reality believed in the existence of other gods, however powerful Jehovah may have seemed to be.

Thus we have watched the restless, shy, and independent Israel, still active enough to establish a foothold in a foreign country, and endowed with sufficient courage to maintain it, but to a large extent remaining careless and fearless, and content to a large extent to live in to-day. There were, however, forces compelling her to group in self-defense. She was begin-

ning to learn the lesson that in unity there is strength, and those individuals who taught her that lesson were assuming an ever larger place in her estimation. In this respect she was at the stage of hero-worship. Any leader whose exploits meant foreign defeat and domestic consolidation was singled out and honoured with lavish confidence and praise. Israel's childhood was a stirring one, a time when she stored up memories which never afterwards died. The magic of the period of the "judges" enchanted the Hebrew imagination so that posterity looked back upon that time as a golden era in the history of Jehovah's people.

## CHAPTER IV

### ISRAEL'S YOUTH

The early-adolescent age of childhood is that period when habits are formed. The youth asks questions because of the birth of curiosity and doubt. The intellect is active and beginning to be analytical. The power of making moral distinctions begins to grow, and the religious instinct is at its practical stage. Moreover, it is the age of organization and team-play, and the spirit of accomplishment and sometimes of adventure and combativeness makes itself keenly felt. The youth of twelve to seventeen is entering upon the sympathetic stage. Sympathy for others, for art, for literature, and for knowledge, plays a large part in his young life. This stage in the life of Israel may be considered as extending from the time of the beginning of Samuel's activity until the end of David's reign. It was the time of Israel's growth in mental activity when she realized the advantage of conservation and consolidation, when her sympathies were quickened and began their expansion, when she began her stage of spiritual discrimination, and when her moral and religious faculties were being trained and developed. It was a period of stress and strain, but

a time when foundations of future usefulness were being firmly laid.

The period between the "judges" and the establishment of the kingdom could not have been entrusted providentially to more competent hands than to those of Samuel. For he was a man of consecrated strength. He had only to manifest himself to be hailed by his time as a "man of God". He was indeed the one man in Israel who could lead his people, and he led them with a strong arm and mighty hand. It was he who nursed the nation through a critical period and launched its first king upon his adventurous career.

Israel's only remaining formidable foe was the Philistine. This strong, enterprising, energetic people had entered Canaan shortly before the Hebrews themselves. Their original home was Crete, and, after a period of adventure during which they had attempted an entrance into Egypt, they settled down in the rich plains bordering on the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean. There they founded a confederacy of five strong cities and became very prosperous.

Shortly after the beginning of Samuel's activity the Philistines launched one of their unexpected attacks. They were well organized and well led, but the Israelites were brave and energetic. The two peoples met at Aphek, near Eben-ezer, where the Philistines were victorious, and, as a sign of their superiority, carried off the sacred symbol of Jehovah's presence, the ark, and set it up in the house of their god, Dagon, at Ashdod. This they did as a tribute to their own god. Fortunately for Israel the experience did not



discourage them. In fact they did not interpret it as a sign of their own weakness nor as evidence of their god's inferiority, but as a result of the sinfulness of the sons of Eli, their priest, who ought to have long ago surrendered the leadership in Israel to Samuel. Eli was a kind of priest-"judge" who was pious and good enough himself but who had so neglected fatherly correction towards his own sons, and who was so easy-going himself, that Israel proved an easy prey to the Philistines. In short, as the sacred writer puts it, Jehovah said, "I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves and he restrained them not". The defeat was interpreted in terms of Israel's own sin.

The Philistines followed up their victory at Aphek and established fortresses at various points in central Palestine. They deprived Israel of weapons as far as they could, and were quick to suppress any manifestation of rebellion against their authority. In spite of the sacred writer's collection of stories about the way in which Jehovah, by means of the ark, showed his superiority over Dagon, it is quite evident that for the time being Israel was hard-pressed by the Philistines. However, the occasion gave birth to the needed leader. There are two accounts in the First Book of Samuel of the way in which Saul came into prominence. The oldest account (9:1-10; 16) tells how Saul was seeking his father's asses and how he met Samuel who invited him to dine with him at Ramah. Saul was of noble family, attractive in person, kingly

in bearing. Samuel was quick to see in this youth the ability and enthusiasm required at that moment. He accordingly revealed the thoughts of his heart to the young man and, finding him receptive and apt, consecrated him there and then for his great task of leader of his people. The later story (8 and 10:17-27a) represents the people as asking for a king. Samuel rebukes them, reminding them that Jehovah is their king, but finally accedes to their wish, assembles them "together unto Jehovah to Mizpah", and institutes a lottery in which Saul is chosen. The earlier story is perhaps the more reliable, the later story is in keeping with the attempt of a later pious writer to ascribe the selection of Saul to divine agency, for lottery was considered in those days to be directly associated with sacred things.

The older account of Saul's election associates him with the prophetic order. This is as it should be, for the work before an Israelitish leader in those days demanded a man of vision and enthusiasm, and visions and enthusiasm were religious agencies, and the possibility of handling the Philistine situation with success demanded all the zeal, insight, and earnestness of which national religion was capable. Religion was the only tried and tested source of the *morale* necessary for the crisis.

The choice of a king had not happened a moment too soon. The Philistine was at the gate, and so was the Ammonite. Saul's fighting qualities were very soon to be put to the test, and Samuel's belief in the necessity of unity was soon to be substantiated.

Nahash, king of Ammon, "came up and encamped against Jebesh-Gilead", and made an impossible demand upon the people of that town as a condition of peace. Messengers came to Saul and begged his assistance. At once Saul was all activity. He summoned the Israelites, made a forced march upon Jebesh-Gilead, surprised the Ammonites, and defeated them. The enthusiasm of the Hebrews knew no bounds. Under the leadership of Samuel they proceeded to the sacred town of Gilgal, and there they swore solemn allegiance to Saul as their king. This was a spontaneous and democratic act. The kingdom was established, unity was realized, and the little nation was prepared to oppose an enthusiastic and united front against the common foe. In spite of the later writer (I Sam. 12) who looked back with regret upon the establishment of the kingdom under Saul, the event was an important one and was a real and effective step in the right direction.

The day at last came. Israel must meet the Philistines, for the Philistines were upon her. Making their way through the pass of Beth-horon to Michmash they struck terror into the hearts of Saul's troops. But it was only temporary, for they had not counted upon the sagacity of the king's young son, Jonathan. Jonathan, by stratagem, learned of the over-confidence of the Philistines, took them unawares, and by his bravery defeated them in the battle of Beth-aven. Jonathan was the hero of the day. But it was only his good sense and the better judgment of the people which saved him from a possible failure to consolidate

the gains he had made against his nation's foes, for Saul's foolish ban on the Hebrew who should stop to eat before nightfall came very near to turning a victory into defeat. The incident serves to draw out the contrast between Jonathan, a man of good judgment, and Saul, an impetuous, superstitious, though brave leader.

In recording the account of Saul's foolish vow the sacred writer is concerned to show how Saul decreased and David increased. Saul was not a man after God's own heart. Or does this story, as well as others, reflect the preference of the later priestly writer for Samuel? However that may be, Saul displeased Samuel, which, in accordance with the philosophy of the time, was equivalent to displeasing God. Samuel had his prerogatives. Just before the battle with the Philistines, Saul's impatience led him to offer the burnt-offering which, in accordance with later thought, was Samuel's prerogative. And now in his victory over Agag, king of the Amalekites, he again overstepped his province in sparing Agag and the best of the spoil which, according to Jehovah's command through Samuel, were to be utterly destroyed. In other words, whatever may have been the real cause of Saul's failure as king and leader, the sacred writer of later times ascribed it to the sin of disobedience and presumption in spiritual matters. Samuel announced to Saul that Jehovah was displeased with him, had rejected him, and had given orders for the selection of his successor.

From a military point of view Saul's early reign

was crowned with success. The Philistines were driven back to their own borders and the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and others soon learned that Saul was not a man to be trifled with. From Gibeah Saul reigned as a real sovereign over his dutiful subjects. But with Saul's rejection by Samuel, the sacred writer concentrates his attention upon David and seeks to show in his description of that brilliant man's career that Jehovah was the real power that planned and guided, moulded and shaped the whole course of Israel's history.

The closing years of Saul's reign were full of trouble and forebodings. Samuel became his enemy and his people were being gradually won over from him by the appealing character of David. He contrasted strongly with his knightly son, Jonathan. Jonathan was brave and noble, possessed of frankness and good judgment, was warm-hearted and clear-visioned, faithful and disinterested, just as Saul used to be, but now Saul's morose brooding undermined his better judgment and he became fanatically and bitterly jealous of David. Nor was that all. His jealousy turned him into an uncontrollable and dangerous despot, feared by all, and gradually losing hold upon his friends, his people, and his kingdom.

Saul's confession of sin did not stay the hand of Samuel. The old king-maker thundered forth his denunciation, "Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah he hath also rejected thee from being king", and proceeded forthwith to anoint David, the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, as king, and the sacred

writer adds his comment, believing as he did that all things came from God and God alone, "now the spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him".

In the appearance of David at court we have a double story. According to one account, David was introduced to Saul as a skilled harpist, but according to the second story David appeared as an armour-bearer. But in any case he was a youth of unusual physique and soldierly bearing. Moreover, he was keen to take advantage of his rare opportunity. He met at the court of king Saul the ablest and most prominent people of his day. He was quick to learn and responsive to all the various stimuli that surrounded him.

But the event which did more than anything else to bring him popularity and honour was the attack of the Philistines and their demand to have the contest settled by a duel between their big man, Goliath, and a Hebrew soldier. For some time the Philistine challenge remained unanswered, until David responded and dispatched the hostile giant. Whereupon David was introduced to Saul, just as if Saul had never met him before (an evidence of the confusion of sources), and Saul took him home with him. But David's victory proved too much for Saul's jealous nature, and his fury was lashed into passion when he heard the women of Israel singing, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands". Saul was highly displeased and sought to slay David by casting a spear at him. Unsuccessful in this, he

sought by stratagem to get David into his power. He married him to his daughter Michal. But Michal really loved David and, with the assistance of her brother Jonathan, saved David from the king's increasing wrath. Then began David's life as an outlaw.

David escaped from the court and fled to Samuel at Ramah "and told him all that Saul had done to him". Thence Samuel and he went to Naioth, but were soon pursued by the messengers of Saul, who, instead of seizing David when they caught up with him, joined themselves to Samuel's prophetic followers. Finally David was forced to flee far from the court, and after pausing at Nob, the priestly house of Eli, went to Gath of the Philistines and began his roving life in Southern Judea. From Gath, David went to Adullam, thence to Mizpeh in Moab, thence to Keilah, pursued by Saul, and from there to Ziph, Maon, and Engedi, where he spared Saul's life. Meanwhile Samuel died at Ramah and David married Abigail, the wife of the churlish Nabal the Calebite. But Saul was still relentless and through his venturesomeness again laid himself open to capture by David, who a second time, at Ziph, showed his reverence for Saul, because Saul was the Lord's anointed. David again accepted the hospitality of Achish of Gath, and from there as headquarters carried on a series of raids in southern Judea which supplied him with the means of propitiating those who were to serve him acceptably in later days.

Saul was nearing a mental and moral collapse. He

was unable to get a grip upon himself. His treatment of his friends had alienated them. His closest observers expressed the belief that his kingdom was soon to pass to David, and even Saul himself was of the same opinion. The Philistine was at the gate, and Saul in terror and moral collapse turned to a wizard for moral support. But his days were numbered. The Philistines gathered at Aphek and prepared for their advance against Saul. For a time David was in fear of being placed in a very awkward position. Achish wanted him to go with the Philistines to battle against Israel. But fortunately the other Philistine princes objected and David was saved from a real dilemma, and set off to defend Ziklag against the Amalekites, whom he defeated. Meanwhile Saul and his sons with their followers met the Philistines in battle at Gilboa, where the Philistines were victorious and Saul met his death. Thus ended the life of a brave soldier but a jealous man, who had allowed his weakness to undermine his judgment and blight his career.

Among the many who mourned the death of Saul none was more sincere than David. The poet-king was a man of deep religious feeling. His high-mindedness had revealed itself during the trying days of his flight from Saul, his clear sense of honour had manifested itself in magnanimity towards his relentless foe, and his great heart expressed itself in sentiments worthy of any age:

"Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!  
How are the mighty fallen!  
Tell it not in Gath,



Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;  
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,  
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

"Ye mountains of Gilboa,  
Let there be no dew nor rain upon you, neither fields of  
offerings;  
For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away,  
The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.  
From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,  
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,  
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.

"Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,  
And in their death they were not divided:  
They were swifter than eagles,  
They were stronger than lions.

"Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,  
Who clothed you in scarlet delicately,  
Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.  
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!

"Jonathan, slain upon thy high places,  
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:  
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:  
Thy love to me was wonderful,  
Passing the love of women.  
How are the mighty fallen,  
And the weapons of war perished!"

Viewed from a religious standpoint, after the manner of our sacred writer, Saul's reign was a failure. He did not measure up to the standard of Samuel's requirements. The vision which Samuel saw of Israel's ideal relationship to Jehovah was not shared by Saul. Saul was a religious man after the fashion

of his time, but Samuel's insight into spiritual things was too deep and noble for Saul's narrower soul. But politically, Saul's reign had accomplished much. He united Israel into one great whole from north to south; he extended his domain considerably; every Canaanitish stronghold, except Jerusalem, was reduced; his authority was respected beyond the Jordan; law and order generally prevailed; and David's brilliant reign was made possible.

David was now the Lord's anointed king of Israel, but although, soon after the death of Saul, he was crowned at Hebron as king of Judah, his authority was questioned in the north. Abner, captain of Saul's host, brought Ishbaal (Ishbosheth), Saul's son, to Mahanaim and made him king over the whole of the north country. Strife between north and south was inevitable. But neither David nor Ishbaal appeared aggressive. Abner and David's captain, Joab, met at Gibeon and there a picked force from both sides met and fought, the advantage remaining with Joab. Abner fled, pursued by Joab and his brother Asahel, but Abner slew Asahel and escaped. Very soon Abner revolted to David who received him, and consented to his plan to win all the northmen over to his side. David was very much pleased. But David's new relationship was distasteful to Joab, whose jealousy knew no bounds. Joab immediately sought out his new rival and, on a pretext of blood-revenge, slew him. Ishbaal was now left alone and would most likely have surrendered himself to David had not the sons of Rimmon murdered him, hoping to be rewarded by

David. But in this case, as in the case of Abner's death, David was profoundly grieved and punished the murderers.

"Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron" and anointed him king over Israel. Thus did David peacefully and honourably succeed to Jehovah's promised reward. Our sources of David's life have so far shown him to have been a singularly noble man, confident in Jehovah's purpose for him, and willing to await the appointed moment. Slowly but surely Jehovah's plan unfolded itself. David's enemies were gathered to their fathers, all opposition crumbled before him, and without much effort on his part, and certainly without any appearance of intrigue, David found himself king over north and south, the chosen of the people and the anointed of Jehovah.

No sooner was he seated on the throne of the united kingdoms, and settled in Jerusalem, his new capital, which he captured from the Jebusites, than he was brought face to face with the nation's foe. The Philistines took the accession of David and the union of north and south as a challenge and a declaration of war. They accordingly mobilized and took up a threatening position in the valley of Rephaim. But David was ready and met them at Baal-Perazim, where he fought the first of two fierce battles, the second being at Geba. David's victory cleared his domain of the Philistines and compelled a lasting peace. He was now left free to consolidate his country. The ark of Jehovah was brought to Jerusalem

with appropriate ceremony, of which, however, Michal disapproved, and David expressed to Nathan, the prophet, his prime minister, a desire to build a temple for Jehovah. But although Jehovah's advice by the hand of Nathan was against such a project for the present, David did make Jerusalem the real centre of his kingdom. David was a man of great insight and foresight. He remembered that all through the reign of Saul unity failed to be effected because of the lack of a centre where it could manifest itself. We are not wrong, therefore, in believing that so soon as David got control of Jerusalem he began to lay plans for the centralization of the political, social, and religious energies of the nation. Nor was any other place in his whole kingdom more suitable for that purpose than Jerusalem. There he built his palace and houses of administration, there he had his "mighty men", there he organized his court, and there he located the sacred ark, the external symbol of Jehovah's divine presence. In Jerusalem David worked and thought, and the great man's soul knit itself with every stone and tissue of that great place. Jerusalem became famous, and primarily because of David. There David had lived, and the impress which he left upon it, the life that he lived in it, and the nobility with which he permeated it, made it forever one of the greatest, noblest, and most inspiring cities of the world.

The rest of the reign of David, with the exception of his war with Ammon and Syria, in which he was successful, was taken up by domestic affairs. In con-

nection with the Ammonite war and the siege of Rabbah the story of David's one great sin is recorded. The sacred writer does not shrink from unfolding in all its detail and hideousness how David, overwhelmed by an overpowering passion, encompassed the death of Uriah in order to secure Bath-sheba, the victim's wife, for himself. Nor does the prophet Nathan, in his parable, scruple to lay bare the villainy of the crime in the presence of the criminal himself. The whole story demonstrates its own authenticity. But it does more than that. It shows what strides religious thinkers in Israel were making towards higher moral conceptions. "The king can do no wrong" is a phrase containing an idea which, among early peoples, was literally applied to the king legally, religiously, and morally. But the religious minds of Israel, as early as David, refused to admit such an imperfect dictum. Therefore Nathan, so soon as he heard of the king's act of injustice and sin, counted it his high privilege to remind the king that such conduct was contrary to the will of a moral and just God. He accordingly appeared before David and, in language pregnant with the power of an insulted moral sense, declared to the king his sin and Jehovah's displeasure. It also gives us such a peep into the inner life of the illustrious king as a whole volume might have failed to do. David, being a man of his time, and endowed with extraordinary powers, could have been a despot. He might very well have met Nathan's reproof with disdain, were it not for the fact that he himself was one of Israel's most enlight-

ened minds. He was a man of God. The whole background of his life was permeated and coloured with a love of Jehovah, of righteousness and truth. Therefore it was that, though he sinned most grievously, his nature was so deeply and sincerely moral and true that he himself with all his heart repudiated the individual act of sin. David's prompt confession and deep contrition served to bring out in strong relief the essential morality of his character. The sin of Judas reflected the background of that sinful man's life, but the sin of David rebounded, for it was not possible for it to assimilate to an essentially noble and moral background.

The story of Ammon's sin with Tamar and the murder of Ammon by Absalom introduce the account of Absalom's career. David's weakness towards Absalom brought him great difficulty and sorrow. Contrary to his accustomed alertness, he was so easy as to allow Absalom to insinuate himself into the affections of David's people, and, when the time was ripe, to launch a conspiracy against his doting father. The plot broke out in Hebron, and was so effective as to force David from Jerusalem. David took with him some of his most tried ministers, who, by diplomacy, undermined the authority and frustrated the plans of Absalom. However, Absalom gathered a large force and pursued David, but Ahitophel's counsel miscarried, and David, with the assistance of the Ammonites, defeated Absalom. It was left to Joab to dispatch Absalom, whom he found hanging in an oak. When Absalom's death was reported to David he

made so much ado about it that Joab was deeply annoyed. Joab reproved David, but the latter never forgot it, and on his death-bed left orders to Solomon to avenge him on Joab.

Sheba's rebellion against David was an indication that David's strong hand was gradually releasing. The old king was nearing his end, and new events were rapidly following one another. The question of succession came up and gave rise to a difficult situation. There were two candidates and two parties. Adonijah, David's son by Haggith, was backed by Joab and Abiathar, the priest. Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, espoused the cause of Solomon, whom Bath-sheba desired to have king. Solomon's party was successful and they persuaded David to anoint their candidate. Zadok and Nathan performed this duty, and Solomon was hailed the successor of King David. Adonijah was alarmed, but was promptly spared and would have been permitted to live in quiet if he had not given signs of rebellion which led to his execution. The way was now clear for Solomon. David was gathered to his fathers and Solomon began his reign.

In looking back over David's career the first thing to be noticed is the military and political genius of the man. When David began his reign, his kingdom extended only from Bethel to Beersheba, but at his death he left a small empire extending from the Lebanons in the north to the border of Egypt. His sway was acknowledged by the Arameans, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, and many desert tribes, and

the power of the Philistines was broken. He united his people and made their name respected far beyond the borders of his kingdom. His capital became one of the most important cities of the ancient world, and his court was one to be counted with in international affairs.

David had also a genius for organization. He associated with himself the wisest men of his time. He had his secretary of state, his keeper of the royal archives, and his prime minister or "king's friend". Then there were the two priestly advisers, Zadok and Abiathar, besides the master of the levies. There were the commander-in-chief, Joab, and the head of the bodyguard, Benaiah. And the two men who did more than anyone else to stimulate public morality and national idealism were the prophets Nathan and Gad.

David was a man of his time, and his time was a period of transition, experiment, and occasional crudity. Seven of Saul's descendants were executed as an atonement for his violation of a covenant with the Gibeonites, an example of crude superstition. On his dying bed David gave a charge to his son Solomon which breathed a spirit of deep vindictiveness, a strange contrast to David's patience with Shimei. These deeds can only be ascribed to the spirit of the time.

On the other hand David was magnanimous, moderate, and courageous. He was deeply religious, keenly sensitive to moral wrong, and loving in disposition. He was a great military leader and an executive



genius. He was a poet and caught the poetic spirit of his age. His was the age of the Oracles of Balaam in their present form, of the Blessing of Jacob and of the Book of Jashar. His own poetical lamentations over Saul, Jonathan, and Abner are superb, and tradition has made him the great Psalmist and poetical musician.

With the end of David's reign we see firmly established in Israel a well organized form of monarchical government, a national purpose formulated, a growing sense of high morality spreading, and a more enlightened form of religion permeating the masses. And all this had its centre in the able, resourceful, and inspired king. David sinned deeply, as only emotional and poetic souls can, but he could suffer deeply and he could love and inspire and adore deeply. To a deeply inspired religious people David was a fountain of inspiration and a leader in high thought and noble action. Under him Israel passed her youth. Through the period of recklessness and doubt, of abstraction and imitation, of clannishness and the desire of unity, of storm and stress, she passed on to an inspired idealism and a strong and virile adolescence which assured her success in the years of trial that were before her. By the end of David's reign Israel's character as a religious people was firmly established, and in her future history we witness the elements of that religious character, being moulded and rounded and shaped, made ready for their place in the manifestation of the People of God.

## CHAPTER V

### ISRAEL'S COMING OF AGE

Late adolescence is the period of hope. The young man or young woman, from about seventeen to twenty-five, is at the stage of self-discovery and adjustment. They serve their apprenticeship and are preparing for life. Among all the maze of this strange world, this aggregation of phenomena, events, and circumstances, this multitudinous complexity of things, the young man or young woman is slowly but surely assimilating just those conditions that are useful to their assumed specialty in life. They may have their doubts and fears and heart problems, and their intellectual misgivings, but underlying all is a tendency in some definite direction. There is no moment more interesting in the life of a man than when he for the first time becomes conscious of the fact that he is a man, and that over against him is a world in which he must live and which he may conquer. Deep answers to deep. The very finest in him goes out to the finest in the world. He longs to test himself in the great play of talents that life holds out to him. It is a period of great searching of heart,

sometimes of conversion, and always of self-discovery and adjustment.

Between the time of David's death and the period of Amos, Israel was in her late adolescence. The future stood before her full of problems, intellectual, moral, and religious. She was preparing for life. She had her doubts to meet and her difficulties to wrestle with. But she was gradually undergoing her conversion, fitting herself into her niche in the world, and recognizing her specialty. She was serving her apprenticeship. She was in the process of self-discovery and adjustment, and her hope was a living and real one. Great ethical and religious decisions were being made, and she was preparing to make that momentous step which forever was to characterize her and make her a peculiar people. She was preparing the way for that clear vision of an all-righteous and all-merciful God, and for that divine discovery of an unique Being who alone created and sustains all life and being.

Solomon succeeded David. The sacred writer has very little detail to give about the reign of Solomon. The reason is probably to be found in the fact that Solomon's reputation as a godly, wise, rich, and mighty ruler so overshadowed everything else that only those events related to these aspects of his life and reign were remembered and recorded.

David left a well-organized kingdom to his son. David's reputation had gone far and wide. Undoubtedly before he died the monarchs of surrounding countries had heard of him and of the expansion of

his dominions. At any rate, so soon as Solomon succeeded to the throne he began to do what he considered to be the only thing left to do in order to make his kingdom a great world empire and comparable to the neighboring great countries. Accordingly, he began to make alliances with foreign kings and to take their daughters in marriage. Egypt was still a considerable country, "and Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David". He also made a treaty—a commercial one—with Hiram, king of Tyre, with a view to his assistance in the works of building, which were going on in Jerusalem. He probably also made a treaty with South Arabia, for its queen came to Jerusalem and was very much impressed with her reception. In fact, his alliances, matrimonial and otherwise, were so numerous and so reciprocally congenial, especially in leniency toward the gods of these foreign peoples, that it was considered the main element which led to the misfortunes of the later years of the great king. We are told that the heart of Solomon was not perfect with Jehovah his God, as was the heart of his father David, "for Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. . . . Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the mount that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And so he did for all his foreign wives who burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. Wherefore Jehovah said unto

Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant." The very policy which the king adapted for the glorification of his kingdom was the chief cause of the failure of his dynasty.

As the sacred writer looks back at the reign of Solomon, with the information he had at hand, he depicts him as a born ruler. He represents the king as taking no action against those who had conspired against him until they further demonstrated their hostility. Then with a bold stroke he removed his enemies and put an end to any rebellion that may have been contemplated. The story about Solomon's prayer and dream in which he asked for wisdom rather than wealth and honour or the life of his foes reveals the king as a man conscious of his great responsibility. Shortly after the beginning of his reign he began to reorganize his kingdom by dividing it into twelve provinces and by increasing the number of responsible officials.

Solomon was wise and clever, he was a great statesman and diplomat, and he was also a great builder. He inherited a Jerusalem which was not much more than a fortress, but he made it one of the finest cities of the ancient Orient. The beautiful temple which he erected upon the eastern hill, the royal palace, the palace for the daughter of Pharaoh, the great Throne Hall, the Hall of Pillars, and the House of the Forest of Lebanon made a group of buildings which was fair

to look upon. Nor did he neglect the fortifications of the city. These he made greater and stronger than ever. In this he was carrying out the wise policy inaugurated by his father, and he extended it to other places than Jerusalem. Six other great fortresses were built, not only for defence but for the protection of lines of international traffic. These fortresses were: Hazor in the north, Megiddo to guard the passage from Esdraelon, Beth-horon which was on the way from Sharon to Judah, Gezer at the mouth of the valley of Ajalon, Baalath further south, and Tamar the door of Hebron. Besides these there were store cities and military posts for the use of the fine army which he had developed.

The most important single deed which Solomon did was the construction of the temple, which David was forbidden to do, and the introduction of the Ark of Jehovah into the Most Holy Place. This Solomon considered the crowning work of his reign. Now Jehovah had a House where his people could worship him with all the pomp and ceremony characteristic of that age.

Solomon's failure was his passion for imperialism. He was a good king, and had done much for the up-building of Israel, but his plans were too large for his country. The result was the projection of schemes for which his people had to be superlatively taxed. Herein lay the chief cause of dissatisfaction. His imperialism would have resulted in the political and economic enslavement of a free and independent people. His people also objected to the introduction

of foreign worship, but the chief difficulty was political and economic. The later writer, of course, emphasized the religious cause and condemned Solomon on the basis of his toleration of other gods. The sacred writer projected his own religious feelings into the past and spoke of the gods of other peoples as "abominations", but while Solomon differentiated very clearly between Jehovah and the other gods, yet he never thought of them as "abominations", although the policy of tolerating them was distasteful even in Solomon's time.

With the exception of an excessive royal ambition, Solomon must be pronounced a great man. He built Jerusalem into a really great and beautiful city, he fortified and strengthened his country, he developed her resources, he earned respect for her in the eyes of the world, and by his diplomacy and wise dealing he maintained peaceful relations with his neighbours, and fostered art, literature, and religion to a remarkable extent.

Assyrian history has done much to establish a reliable chronology for the Old Testament. The Persian, Neo-Babylonian, and Assyrian chronological lists link up the Ptolemaic Canon with early Assyrian reckoning in such a way as to furnish a thoroughly reliable chronological background as far back as 911 B. C. During the period of the divided kingdom in Israel, Assyrian armies often came into contact with Palestine, and whenever the dates of such contacts can be definitely established in Assyrian reckoning we acquire a point of departure for Biblical

chronology. Such a point of contact is found when Shalmaneser III conducted a campaign against Hazael of Damascus. Tyre and Sidon sent him gifts, and Jehu, the murderer of the kings of Judah and Israel, to gain the favour of the Assyrian monarch, paid him what was undoubtedly a coronation tribute. According to Assyrian chronology, which is exact, this took place in 842 B. C.

The date 842 B. C. is of peculiar importance for us. According to II Kings 9-10, Jehu slew the kings of Israel and Judah. Accordingly the year of Jehu's accession in Israel marks the beginning of a reign in Judah also. Now, according to Biblical reckoning the number of years between Jehu's accession, on the basis of the length of the reigns of the kings of Israel, and the division of the kingdom at the death of Solomon is 98, and the number of years between the accession of Jehu's contemporary in Judah and the division of the kingdom is 95. Taking 95 to be the more reliable, as we have reason to believe, then the division of the kingdom took place in 937 B. C. With this date agree the Egyptian records of the reign of Shishak I, who received the refugee, Jeroboam, and later invaded Palestine. Thus at two points the history of Israel and Judah synchronizes, when Jehu slew the rulers of Israel and Judah in 842 B. C. and the division of the kingdom at the death of Solomon in 937 B. C. With these two dates settled it is easy with the aid of the chronology of the Books of the Kings (namely, the length of each reign and at the accession of each king the corresponding year of the



reign of his contemporary in the other kingdom) to estimate the dates of any king.

Solomon died, then, in 937 B. C. On his death Rehoboam became king, but a rebellion broke out immediately under the leadership of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite. The leading reasons for the revolt are: first, the heaviness of the tasks imposed by Solomon in order to carry out all of the various undertakings, and secondly, the tactlessness of Rehoboam. Before the death of Solomon, Jeroboam had already been designated by the religious party as his successor. The extravagance of Solomon had already displeased the people, but, according to the sacred writer, Jehovah, for David's sake, did not propose to dethrone Solomon, but expressed his intention of disrupting the kingdom on Solomon's death. The sacred writer, therefore, relates how Abijah, the prophet, met Jeroboam and told him of Jehovah's intention. When Solomon heard of this Jeroboam was obliged to flee to Egypt. But on Solomon's death Jeroboam returned and, with his followers and admirers from the north, presented himself to Rehoboam to ask for certain political reforms. The young king, taking the advice of the younger set among his counsellors, declared himself opposed to any reforms and determined to carry on as his father did. Jeroboam and his followers went home and raised the standard of revolt.

Of course, there were other causes that led to the revolt. Both David and Solomon had been suspected of favouritism toward the south. And there were real

geographical and racial differences between the south and the north. Furthermore, although north and south united against the Philistines as a common foe, rivalry never entirely died out.

The result of the revolt was a division of the empire of Solomon into two rather small kingdoms. Judah was the smaller, but was well protected by nature. There was the city of Jerusalem, and there was established the line of David as an hereditary kingship. Israel was larger but more open to attack. All the old tribes, except Judah, were there, and there were the pioneering, progressive, and virile elements of the Hebrew people. The leading tribe in Israel was Ephraim, but Judah was conservative and more discriminating religiously. Israel was open to external influence, her dynasties were short-lived, and the sapping of her vitality by continual restlessness soon brought her career to an end. In Judah, the dynasty of David had a stabilizing effect. There was repose there. Men had more time for meditation, and thought for religion was given a chance.

So Jeroboam became king of Israel. But his first great act was one which for ever afterwards branded him as disloyal to Jehovah. At Bethel and Dan he instituted for worship two calves of gold. He did this not because he was conscious of any disloyalty to Jehovah—he was merely lacking in spiritual insight—but because he wished to turn the religious attention of his people away from Jerusalem. And so the sacred writer tells us that a prophet from Judah appeared at Bethel and warned the king against his

foolish act. But the king was stubborn and his stubbornness was rewarded by the death of his son. At any rate, the Jewish writer saw in the king's loss of his son the just reward of his idolatry. But it is quite evident from his radicalism at Bethel and Dan that he had no understanding of the religious psychology of his people, and in his attempt to help his people to forget Jerusalem and its temple he committed acts of impiety which forever afterwards defaced his reputation—he was “Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin”.

Although Rehoboam's reign was a long one, he was without doubt a physical and moral weakling. Had he been aggressive he might have won back the north, for the religious party soon turned against Jeroboam. But the wonder is, considering his weakness, that Jeroboam did not invade Judah, undefended as it was in the north. However, Jeroboam was busy in his own kingdom, and perhaps contented himself with the fact that his old host, Shishak (Sheshonk, 945-924) king of Egypt, invaded Judah, sacked Jerusalem, and carried off much spoil, while Rehoboam stood by and did nothing. The continual war between Jeroboam and Rehoboam of which the sacred writer speaks was probably more mental and intentional than actual.

Rehoboam was succeeded by a weak son, but his grandson, Asa, was strong and vigorous and did much to check the growth of Canaanitish religious practices among his people. In the northern kingdom, Jeroboam was also succeeded by a weakling son, which

brought to an end the dynasty. A new dynasty was inaugurated by Baasha the conqueror of Nadab, and he moved his capital from Shechem to Tirzah. Between Asa and Baasha there was a continual warfare. The conflict seems to have been started when Baasha fortified Ramah, and thereby aimed at a commercial blockade of the southern kingdom. Asa cleverly induced Benhadad, king of Syria, to attack Baasha, which he did, and as soon as Baasha had withdrawn his forces from Ramah, Asa seized it, and destroyed it, and built two fortresses for himself, one at Geba and the other at Mizpah. Baasha, it seems, displeased the religious party in Israel, for it is recorded that the prophet Jehu foretold his downfall and that of his dynasty. At any rate, Baasha's son, Elah, was a drunkard, and was slain by a military officer, by name, Zimri, who had himself made king, and exterminated the family of Baasha just as the prophet had said. But Zimri's fate was soon sealed, for a revolt broke out, headed by another military officer, Omri, who was chosen by the army. Zimri committed suicide. For a time there was uncertainty as to who should succeed Zimri, part of the people demanding Tibni, the son of Ginath, and part asking for Omri. But Tibni died and Omri was made king.

The sacred writer has very little to say about Omri, other than his disapproval of him religiously. But from indirect references to him, and from extra-biblical material it is certain that he was a great man. He was a soldier of considerable ability; he was a successful politician; he subdued Moab, according to

the account on the Moabite Stone, and although he was unsuccessful against Syria his diplomacy warded off for the time-being the new menace which appeared in the form of invasions into the west by Ashurnazirpal. Omri is mentioned on the Assyrian inscriptions in such a way as to lead to a belief in his great importance.

Omri's greatest accomplishment was the founding of the city of Samaria. For some years Shechem and then Tirzah had served as capitals, but Omri saw the importance of a strong centre for the kingdom. He accordingly bought from Shemer a hill, descending precipitously for several hundred feet on three of its sides into a broad and fertile valley. Gradually a strong wall was built around it and it became practically impregnable. It grew into great importance, rivalling in many ways its sister city in the southern kingdom. From Samaria was one of the most beautiful of the many grand views in Palestine. Henceforth, till the fall of the northern kingdom in 722, Samaria was the centre and source of all life and activity.

The next two reigns in the northern and southern kingdoms were periods of great importance. Omri was succeeded by his son Ahab, and Asa was followed by his son Jehoshaphat. Ahab's reign was important from a religious point of view. He married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon. Now Jezebel was a very ambitious woman. Far from being satisfied with the recognition of her god in Samaria, she insisted upon a wide-spread propaganda in favour of

Phoenician Baalism. Fortunately for the cause of the religion of Jehovah there appeared on the scene at this time one of the most courageous and fearless of Israel's early prophets. It was Elijah, an ascetic from the desert. Elijah was adamant against Baalism. He called upon the people to declare their loyalty to Jehovah. An opportune moment arose, in which Elijah staged a most striking and telling contest. There came just at this time one of those prolonged periods of drought so common to those countries. The inhabitants of the country were searching their hearts for a cause of this great calamity, when Elijah appeared, and told them that it was a judgment and warning from Jehovah. Then assembling the people on Mount Carmel he instituted a telling test in which he demonstrated that as far as Israel was concerned the Lord Jehovah was God. The representatives of Baalism were put to confusion, and Elijah's victory was complete. And although he had a temporary relapse after his contest on Mount Carmel, in which he fled from the powerful queen, he had succeeded in planting in the hearts of his people a conviction and a belief in the supremacy of Jehovah which was destined to grow in definiteness and force until Baalism was entirely crippled. Elijah's test was fatal to Phoenician religious opposition.

Nor was Elijah concerned only with religious matters. He was just as unbending and unmitigating in political and social affairs. This being so he was destined sooner or later again to clash with Queen

Jezebel, for she had her own ideas of royal prerogatives. An occasion soon came. Naboth, the Jezreelite, had a vineyard adjoining the royal palace in Jezreel. Ahab wanted it and appealed to Naboth to sell it. Naboth refused, saying it was a heritage which he desired to keep in his own family. Jezebel learned of the king's wish and immediately set about to acquire the vineyard. Her method was arbitrary, causing Naboth to be accused of blasphemy, for which he was stoned. Elijah heard of this and appeared before Ahab, whom he fearlessly denounced.

These prophetic stories reveal Ahab as completely under the thumb of the clever queen, and he is consequently considered pretty much of a weakling. But in reality he was a far-sighted man in many matters. He showed his statesmanship in his dealings with Damascus (I Kings 20: 32-42), and he demonstrated his bravery in seeking to win back the control of the frontier fortress of Ramoth-Gilead, and in sending a large force in 854 B. C. to assist in opposing Shalmaneser.

For many years before Ahab's reign Assyria had designs on the west. Ashurnazirpal was a great warrior and had extended his sway from the Tigris to the Mediterranean, and as far south as the Lebanon mountains. This king was succeeded in 860 by his son Shalmaneser who reigned till 825. Shalmaneser inherited his father's desire to dominate the west, and 854 found him at Karkar on the Orontes. There he was met by a coalition of western states, among them being Israel, under Ahab, who contributed many

chariots and soldiers. The battle was indecisive, and Shalmaneser returned home.

During most of the reign of Ahab, Judah was quiet under her king Jehoshaphat. But so soon as the menace of Assyria was removed the bond which united Syria and Israel in peace snapped. Then war broke out. Ahab sought an alliance with Jehoshaphat, when he wanted to acquire Ramoth-Gilead. The prophets, who had gained considerable reputation as statesmen, were consulted, and promised success. One prophet, however, could not be so easily flattered into a recognition of Ahab, the enemy of Jehovah. He was Micaiah ben Imlah, who declared that Ahab's campaign would not be successful. Nevertheless Ahab persisted, and was slain in battle in 853. He was succeeded by Ahaziah, who reigned only two years. Ahaziah was condemned by the prophets because of his lack of faith in Jehovah, in enquiring of the god of Ekron, Baalzebub, when he was sick. He was succeeded by Jehoram, another son of Ahab. Jehoram was more energetic than his brother and with the aid of Jehoshaphat attacked Mesha of Moab because of his rebellion, after the death of Ahab, and defeated him.

Jehoram's contemporary in Judah was Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat. He was succeeded by his son Ahaziah, whose mother was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri. Israel and Judah again united against Syria. This time Jehoram, king of Israel, was at war with Hazael of Syria and Ahaziah joined with him in an attack upon Ramoth-Gilead where Jehoram was



wounded. Shortly after this event, in 842, Shalmaneser again appeared in the west, and for a third time attacked Hamath. This time he was successful and Jehu of Israel, among others, hastened to pay him tribute.

Elijah was succeeded in the prophetic office by Elisha, a man of more gentle and gracious character than Elijah, but at the same time a man of great consecration, and one who had made a deep and lasting impression upon his people. His reputation for good and charitable deeds was so great that many miraculous stories are preserved about him. The partition between divinity and humanity was so thin that these early Israelites found it very easy to ascribe superhuman acts to their heroes. Nor was Elisha's work confined to the masses. His advice was much sought after by kings and rulers of the people. When Israel and Judah allied against Moab, Elisha's counsel was sought, and though he took occasion to reprove the king of Israel for his unfaithfulness to Jehovah, he rendered worthy service to his country on this important occasion. His influence on Israel, high and low, rich and poor, was effective and lasting. His reputation as a man of good works extended beyond the borders of Israel, so much so that a great Syrian nobleman, Naaman, appeared before him for his advice and help.

These stories about Elisha have their religious value. They may be the vivid record, in characteristically Oriental form, of unusual happenings, but they are much more, for they testify to the boundless

faith that Israel had in the reality of God and his ever-present aid. Jehovah was no transcendental being merely, neither was he a god who was powerless beyond a limited geographical area, but he was exceedingly powerful. There were other gods but they could not compare in effectiveness with Jehovah. Moreover, for his people he was ready and willing to do anything. It may be an individual charitable act, like the multiplication of the loaves and grain, or a national act, like the defence of Samaria against the Syrians. Whatever was the difficulty, Jehovah could be counted upon by the faithful Israelite.

Elisha's most important act was a political one. When he was chosen successor to Elijah a momentous commission was entrusted to him, namely, the crowning of Jehu, whom Elijah had anointed to be future king of Israel. Now, Jehu was an Israelitish general in command of the operations against Ramoth-Gilead when Jehoram was wounded. He was a religious enthusiast. He believed himself to be chosen of God to destroy Baalism. He accordingly went to work in a grim and most systematic manner to execute all supporters of Baalism, the whole house of Ahab, all the leaders of Israel, the king and royal family of Judah, and paid tribute to Shalmaneser for moral support against those whom he considered enemies of his god.

But Jehu's zeal outran the bounds of all reason. He had been chosen by Jehovah, but his bloody deeds were not acceptable. The result was tribulation. Hazael of Syria invaded Israel and reduced the king-

dom to great straits. Civil war was rampant in Judah. Athaliah, mother of the slain king of Judah, usurped the throne and killed all the remaining children except Joash who was rescued by his aunt, Jehoshabea. With the assistance of the priest, Jehoiada, Joash was protected. Athaliah was slain, and Joash was made king of Judah. His reign was a long and comparatively prosperous one. An interesting account is given in II Kings 12, of the way in which, during the reign of Joash, the good priest, Jehoiada, collected money for the repairs of the temple.

The chronology of this period is difficult to establish, but if the reign of Jotham be considered to some extent co-regnal with that of Uzziah, the difficulty will be overcome.

After Jehu's loss of territory at the hands of Hazael, he died. His successor was his son, Jehoahaz, who was forced to submit unconditionally to Syria, and Judah was saved from invasion only by the prompt submission of Joash to Hazael. Jehoahaz was succeeded by his son, Jehoash, who to some extent repaired his father's reverses, for he took the initiative against Hazael's son, Benhadad III. He won back the cities which Hazael had taken from his father, and smote the Syrians three times.

Joash of Judah was succeeded by his son Amaziah. After a successful campaign against Edom, in which he showed much good judgment and tact, he, for some unknown reason, challenged Jehoash, king of Israel, to battle. The result was a crushing defeat for Amaziah and his death at the hand of conspirators.

Amaziah was succeeded by his son Uzziah, of whom II Kings gives us very little information. But II Chronicles makes up for this to some extent, in describing the extent to which Uzziah increased his kingdom, cared for agriculture, and fortified Jerusalem. During his reign Judah grew prosperous and wealthy, and along with it came an increase in injustice, oppression, and crime.

Uzziah's contemporary in the northern kingdom was Jeroboam II, son of Jehoash. Jeroboam's reign was a successful and glorious one. He reconquered the lost territory of his forefathers and exacted tribute from Moab. He extended his sway to the very gates of Damascus, and multiplied the prosperity of his people. There is no period in the history of Israel comparable to the reign of Jeroboam II for prosperity. During this period both Hebrew kingdoms were at the height of their prosperity. They were governed by two able and wise kings, foreign oppression was checked, the arts of peace were cultivated, and prosperity reigned everywhere.

The period which we have had under consideration in this chapter was one of the most important in the history of the Hebrews. During some of the reigns, such as those of Jehoshaphat, Jeroboam II, and Uzziah, the land enjoyed considerable tranquility and peace. Commerce flourished, luxury became common, and leisure for the finer arts was not uncommon. It was somewhere in this period that the first serious attempt was made to collect and record the scattered literature of the southern kingdom. This may have happened

during the reign of Jehoshaphat. And what a splendid piece of work it was! What a comprehensive plan the writer gave himself! He set out to tell the story of his race since the beginning of the world. And so with ancient poems and myths, with prose and legend, with chronology and law, he wove a wonderfully interesting human document. Through it all we see shining the age of the man. We see his view of history, his moral distinctions, and his idea of God, his ideals, his desires, and his aspirations. It was along in the same general period that the *Book of the Covenant* (Ex. 20 : 22-23 : 19) was compiled out of existing decisions and acknowledged laws, and it is probable also that Deut. 33 was written near about this time by an Israelite. Perhaps at the end of this period, another Israelite tried to do for the northern kingdom what we have seen was done for Judah. Except that in the case of the Israelite, history was traced back not earlier than the time of Abraham. The Judæan story has been called "J", and this story is known as "E", or the Ephraimitish History. This northern history was more biographical than the southern account, but covered pretty much the same ground. It, however, represents a higher standard of morals, and a deeper and finer conception of God and religion. The two stories supplement each other and are priceless treasures not only for the student of the Hebrew people, but also for all who are interested in the history of the human race.

Perhaps the most remarkable phenomenon of this

period is the development in influence of the prophetic order. From a scattering prophet here and there during the united kingdom, this class of people became quite large, numbering, perhaps, hundreds. Their headquarters were at such places as Bethel, Gilgal, and Samaria. They were self-constituted critics of the politics and morals of their age. They were undoubtedly men of God who believed in their mission. They took themselves supremely seriously and were not afraid of tackling any problem. Because of the great prominence and power acquired by some of them there gradually came into being a class of inferior men who called themselves prophets, but, who, in reality, were merely demagogues who prophesied pleasant things. But the real prophet was easily distinguished by his genuineness and by the power he wielded over the affairs of men. He often became so familiar with domestic and foreign affairs, so keen a critic of political events, that his advice was much sought after. In other words, he became a statesman whom the king often found it advisable and necessary to consult. He had not yet, however, reached the apex of his influence. That was reserved for his great successors, the writing prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries B. C.

One cannot study the history of the Hebrews without being conscious of the sensitiveness of these people to moral distinctions. And it is easy to note how that from period to period that consciousness became more and more sensitive. A decided step in the right direction was made during this period. It comes out in the

leniency with which Amaziah treated the kinsmen of the conspirators. The moral solidarity of the family or clan was being broken up, and with it a step towards the recognition of the individual and his rights. This tendency is also illustrated by the growing inclination to recognize the rights of individuals as against the corporate will of the ruler. Forces were at work during this period which finally issued in the doctrine of individual responsibility and a deepened individual consciousness.

By the time of Amos the Hebrew people had grown up to young manhood and had come of age. Their sinews were gradually hardened and perfected with many a strain and pull, their pulse beat steadily as a result of many a trying fever, their blood ran cool and their eyes saw clearly, because mingled with their sea of glass was the purifying and refining fire of experience. They had served their apprenticeship, they had had their doubts and fears, and they were beginning to experience adjustment and self-discovery. This was perhaps the most eventful period of their life, but they were only beginning to enter upon that fuller and richer life which was destined to be theirs. Now they were experiencing that pleasure which comes from perfect health and the exercise of newborn talents and powers. The world of phenomena, events, and conditions was before them and they were just testing their strength and grappling with some of its problems.

## CHAPTER VI

### ISRAEL'S MATURITY

It is said that by forty a man should have realized himself. That is, the ideals and aspirations of youth, the visions of young-manhood should begin by forty to be realized if life is at all to be successful. At forty a man's character is formed. What he is then is liable to be the tenor of the rest of his life and the standard by which his whole life is to be measured. To be mature is to be fit by growth and development for any function, action, or state, appropriate to its kind. What a man is at maturity, if he is mature, is what he ought to be.

The same is true of a nation or people. At maturity Babylonia had reached that stage of development in life and thought which we have learned to associate with Babylonia. The same was true of Egypt, of Greece, of Rome, of any nation or people. Legal exactitude is a prominent element in the character which we are accustomed to ascribe to Roman civilization; and literary and artistic perfection are the chief elements in the character which men ascribe to Greece and Greek civilization. The world's greatest religious people were the Hebrews. They have given the world



its noblest vision of God. The three greatest world-religions are Hebraic in character. A noble religious conception is that element in the character which we know as Hebraic. At maturity Israel had developed that function which was appropriate to her—the vision of her prophets had given to the world a religion which was unique. Israel's gift to the world was religious. Consequently, in studying Israel's history at her maturity we shall be passing in review the background of those events which were making her history, and the lives of those men who were giving expression to a new and clearer vision of God.

The age of Israel's maturity was a period of great moral and religious awakening. The stage for this great scene was set during the reigns of Jeroboam II and Uzziah. Never had the two kingdoms been so prosperous. Jeroboam II became the very saviour (II Kgs. 14:27) of Israel, had recovered all her lost territory, and had extended her boundaries to the gates of Damascus. Judah was wealthier than she had ever been. The Philistines were placed under tribute, Ammon and Edom were reduced to vassalage, and commerce was opened up with all the surrounding nations of prominence. Prosperity engendered luxury and ease, and these in turn gave birth to vice, violence, and oppression.

Formerly, Jehovah's prophets had to deal only with individuals here and there. It was the king or some unprincipled nobleman who needed correction. But now pollution was wide-spread. Vice and violence went hand in hand. The nation was rotten to the

core and ready for a moral and religious revolution. Nor were there wanting those who could rise to the occasion. Israel had its Amos and Hosea, and Judah had its Isaiah and Jeremiah, its Micah and Ezekiel. Fortunately, these men or their followers put a portion at least of their burning messages into writing, and they, with the historical books, give us a fair view of the progress of events during the period of Israel's maturity. There is not much difficulty about the chronology of the period, the outstanding events being the fall of Samaria in 722, the deliverance of Jerusalem in 701, the fall of Nineveh in 606, the fall of Jerusalem in 586, and the fall of Babylon in 538.

After the death of Jeroboam II dynasty followed dynasty in Israel in quick succession until the end in 722. As soon as Jeroboam was gone internal strife and foreign invasion followed. In seven years there were four changes of dynasty and six rulers. Things became chaotic. In 738 Tiglath-Pileser exacted an enormous tribute from Menahem, and by the time Pekah came to the throne, in succession to Pekahiah, all Galilee and the region east of the Jordan had been wrenched from Israel. In 732 the same Assyrian king finally conquered Syria and its capital, Damascus, and Israel was left without defence. In 727 Tiglath-Pileser died. He was succeeded by an equally strong man, Shalmaneser IV. Israel was now prostrate before the might of Assyria. Tiglath-Pileser already had made Hoshea king over "the house of Omri", and now in the reign of Shalmaneser this weak king was foolish enough to revolt at the instigation

of the Egyptian king. This roused the ire of the Assyrian king, who set out for the west. By 722 the Assyrian army was before Samaria. Shalmaneser died, but his successor, Sargon II, finished the work. Samaria fell, and Sargon, in accordance with Assyrian custom, carried away into captivity over twenty-seven thousand Israelites. Thus the ten tribes were scattered throughout the vast Assyrian empire and Assyrian colonists were sent west to introduce an element of loyalty into this newly-formed arm of the Assyrian dominions.

About midway into the reign of Jeroboam, approximately 750 B. C., the moral consciousness of Israel and the development of her conception of Jehovah came to a head and found expression in the burning and thrilling message of Amos.

In the little town of Tekoa, about twelve miles south of Jerusalem, there lived a herdsman, a keeper of sheep and dresser of sycamore trees. Neither by education nor profession was he a prophet. But he was a right-minded man, one who had lived the simple life, in the open air, and yet a man who had often visited the cities on business and therefore knew of the corruption and vice of his time. After some years of thought and deliberation, Amos determined to raise his voice in warning against the sins and corruptions of Israel. It was strange that he did not begin at home, in Jerusalem. He probably calculated that Israel was the more exposed of the two countries and needed the first warning. However, filled with a consciousness of the righteousness of his cause, and

that indeed he was the mouth-piece of Jehovah himself, seized with an iron determination and burning zeal, inspired with his own message and emboldened by enthusiasm, he appeared in the royal city of Bethel and there began his mission.

The Book of Amos, even as it stands to-day, shows us how well the prophet had thought out the message he was about to deliver. His discourses are models of logical arrangement. He begins by leading his listeners to admit that Damascus, Philistia, Phoenicia, Edom, Moab, and Ammon deserved the wrath of Jehovah, and that even Judah also had sinned. He thus, at the outset, won the good-will of his audience. Then he bursts forth with his message of denunciation against Israel. And just because Israel was the chosen of Jehovah she would be doubly punished for her sins, for to whom much has been given, from him much is expected. Then he goes on to specify and elaborate his thesis.

The need of the age was a restatement of the character of Jehovah, and an enunciation of the principles of righteousness and justice. And that was the burden of Amos' teaching. He showed that Jehovah was no national deity who sponsored the cause of his own people, right or wrong. But, on the contrary, he demonstrated the omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience of the power of Jehovah, and with it his perfect righteousness and justice. To correspond with this, Amos unfolded a national programme for Israel that was nothing short of revolutionary. Israel's national, social, economic, and re-

ligious life must reflect the character of God. Israel must make a new covenant with Jehovah. She had proved faithless to the former agreement and must be duly punished. Amos saw the inevitable coming of Assyrian hosts, and interpreted it as the hand of God. But the great man did not stop there, we believe, but his prophetic eye saw into the future, and there he saw a reign of righteousness and justice, a veritable kingdom of God.

Thus was begun the greatest era of reform known to the history of religion. The elements of an ethical monotheism were for the first time in the history of the human race manifested. And what that implied was not fully realized until the perfect revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Upon the horizon of human thought there was seen for the first time the Son of Righteousness with his impartial message to all mankind. And along with this inspired revelation of the character of God went a crumbling of the old walls of the world's social structure. New foundations were laid and the corner-stone was justice. In man's relationship with man as well as with God an absolutely new standard was set. It is described in those immortal words of the prophet which form the keynote of his gospel:

“But let judgment roll down as waters,  
And righteousness as a mighty stream” (Amos 5:24).

For the first time in the history of religious thought, the relationship between morality and religion is emphasized and clearly expressed. Hitherto

very little difference was felt to exist between a moral and ceremonial misdemeanour. Now the true balance was struck. The most elaborate ceremonial is an offence to Jehovah when divorced from sincerity of heart and purity of life. The two belong together, ceremony and moral dealing, but ceremonial must be a true symbol of the real presence of righteousness and justice of living.

The same circumstances which called forth Amos found an answer to their challenge in a native Israelite. Hosea had the same political situation to meet. The same moral and religious problems, only in a more accentuated form, faced the younger prophet. But Hosea met the situation in his own way. Being an Israelite he had a more sympathetic understanding of his country than Amos. He was tender, sympathetic, emotional. His home life had prepared him for his great task. It seems likely that he married a woman who proved unfaithful to him. Looking back on this experience from a later period, he interpreted it as purposely fore-ordained and ordered by Jehovah. He, accordingly, considered his domestic life a parable of the ways of Jehovah with Israel. Jehovah had married Israel when she was in a state of innocence. He loved her and she cared for him. After her entrance into the land of Canaan she deserted him and went after the Baalim. Then came the years of Assyrian invasion, and finally was to come the greatest punishment of all, the exile. But Jehovah would forgive Israel and restore her, take her back again as his bride.

Such, in brief, is the message of the prophet. The contents of the book are in a fragmentary and illogical form. No definite plan is traceable. But the message is clear. Israel was corrupt at the core. Violence and vice were ever rampant. Punishment was inevitable. But a bright future was in store for a repentant people.

Hosea's task was, like that of Amos, to reveal a nobler conception of the character of God. Both Amos and Hosea had learned to think of Jehovah in terms of universality, of omnipotence, omnipresence, and of omniscience. Amos emphasized the righteousness and justice of God. Hosea, assuming all this, gave to the world such a picture of God's loving mercy as was never before conceived. Amos emphasized the certainty with which God's justice would lead him to punish a wicked people. Hosea did this also; but he added that God's mercy knew no bounds and would abundantly pardon. Hosea's vision of Jehovah's relationship to Israel as husband and father reveals the warmth of sentiment and the depth of feeling which animated Hosea's every thought and deed in his work of saving Israel from ultimate ruin. Unfortunately, both Amos and Hosea failed to save Israel from immediate disaster. In spite of their teaching and preaching Israel kept on in her sinful way, and affliction came. But the finest minds still insisted upon the certainty of a brighter future.

Going back now to the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, we recall that prosperity reigned during his time. Then came Jotham, his son and successor, who

was co-regent during his father's illness, who was devoted to the service of Jehovah, but who had not the force and energy to curtail the hated sacrifices to the Canaanitish Baalim. Jotham was succeeded by his son Ahaz in 737. In 735 came a crisis. The young, inexperienced, and obstinate king was face to face with an invasion on the part of Israel and Syria as a result of his refusal to join with them against Assyria. Ahaz seriously considered submission to Assyria as a counter-stroke. Against the advice of Isaiah he appealed to Tiglath-Pileser IV, paid homage to him, and virtually placed his country on the footing of a vassal-state. Damascus fell before the Assyrian in 732, and Samaria in 722, while Judah remained in dishonourable peace.

In 715 Ahaz died and was succeeded by his son Hezekiah, who turned out to be a vigorous, far-sighted, and noble king, and, in spite of the burden of an annual tribute to Assyria which he inherited from his father, he entered energetically into the work of strengthening his country for future eventualities. In 705 Sargon II died and was succeeded by Sennacherib, a man of remarkable energy and severity. In 703 the west lands revolted and Judah, against Isaiah's advice and trusting to promises from Egypt, joined. In a series of campaigns into the west, Sennacherib crushed all opposition in Phoenicia, subdued the towns of Philistia, and caused Moab, Ammon, and Edom to submit. He then turned to Jerusalem, after having sacked the whole of Judea. Hezekiah was soon forced to come to terms and pay tribute. It



happened in 701. However, before Sennacherib could consolidate his successes he was called back east by revolutions at home, and by a pestilence which broke out among his soldiers. Thus Jerusalem was saved from surrender and disaster, and the words of Isaiah, that Jehovah would protect his city, were vindicated.

Very little is known about the last years of Hezekiah's reign. Manasseh succeeded in 696, was young and religiously weak, and came under the influence of Assyrian culture and religion. He allowed Assyrian religious customs to have a free hand and persecuted the followers of Jehovah. This policy was followed also by Amon, who succeeded Manasseh in 641.

When Manasseh was seventeen years of age, Sennacherib was murdered and was succeeded by Esarhaddon, a strong, vigorous, and generous king. In 688 Ashurbanipal came to the throne. He tells us that Manasseh assisted him in his first campaign into Egypt in the first year of his reign. The loyalty with which Manasseh and Amon clung to Assyria was in many ways highly beneficial. Judah was given a period of peace for reconstruction, her trade with Assyria was encouraged, and Assyrian culture penetrated the chief centres of the country.

Amon was succeeded by Josiah in 639 and he reigned till 609. These thirty years were very significant for Judah. Once more there was a return to Jehovah. There began a strong reform which resulted in a growing confidence in the nation's integrity. Assyria was at the height of its intellectual glory under its

cultured king, Ashurbanipal. But there were signs of trouble. From the north a fierce and warlike people, the Scythians, were pressing down. Assyria was well protected, but the surrounding countries suffered and Judah was much alarmed.

After the reign of Ashurbanipal, Assyria began to decline. The Egyptian king, Necho, thought this a good opportunity to extend his empire, as his fathers had done, into Asia. He accordingly enlisted a large army of mercenaries and began his march into the empire of Assyria. On his way he was opposed by Josiah, who was still a faithful tributary to Assyria. The battle took place at Megiddo where Josiah was slain. Judah then passed from Assyrian to Egyptian vassalage. Necho proceeded to the Euphrates, but soon returned and established himself at the strategical town of Riblah on the Orontes. He then sent for Jehoahaz, who had succeeded Josiah, sent him bound to Egypt, and placed Eliakim on the throne under the name of Jehoiakim. But the overlordship of Necho was not to go unchallenged, for the Neo-Babylonian king, Nabopolassar, sent an army under his son Nebuchadrezzar. The Babylonians and Egyptians met at Carchemish in 605, where Necho was decisively defeated. This event took place only one year after Nineveh had fallen before the Medes, a hardy, mountainous people, in 606. In this they were assisted by the Neo-Babylonian king, Nabopolassar.

Before Nebuchadrezzar returned from his pursuit of the fleeing Egyptian army, news came to him of his father's death. He hastened back to Babylon to suc-

ceed, and reigned from 604 to 562. His treaty with the Medes left him free to develop the resources of his country. This he did in a most efficient way.

Shortly after the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadrezzar seemed so militarily inactive that Jehoiakim became bold and refused to pay his accustomed tribute to Chaldea. In 597 Nebuchadrezzar sent an army into Judea to besiege Jerusalem. Just then Jehoiakim died and was succeeded by Jehoiakin, a youth of only eighteen. The young king wisely offered no resistance to Nebuchadrezzar, and the Babylonian king satisfied himself by deporting the royal family, the court, and some important leaders and people. These he settled along the canal Chebar, where they were allowed to live in peace and relative freedom. Nebuchadrezzar placed Mattaniah, a son of Josiah, upon the throne. Mattaniah changed his name to Zedekiah.

Nebuchadrezzar confidently expected that there would be no immediate need of troubling himself about Judea now that all the leaders of the people were in Babylonia. But in 588 Hophra or Apries came to the Egyptian throne. He was vigorous and ambitious. Against Jeremiah's advice, Judah revolted at the bidding of Hophra. Immediately Nebuchadrezzar appeared on the scene. The whole of Palestine was overrun. But the Babylonian king found Tyre, Lachish, Azekah, and Jerusalem difficult to take. Indeed, with all his might, a year and a half passed before a breach was made in the walls of Jerusalem. This took place in July 586. The

soldiers poured into the city, and Zedekiah and his body-guard escaped and fled towards the Jordan. They were overtaken by the Babylonians, and taken before Nebuchadrezzar at Riblah, where Zedekiah was blinded and taken as a prisoner to Babylonia.

Zedekiah's foolish rebellion and stubborn resistance provoked the Babylonians and this time they utterly destroyed the city, levelling the walls, burning houses and palaces, and stripping the temple of all its beauty and glory. Thus came to end the city which David had built and Solomon had beautified, and which had become one of the finest capitals of the ancient world. Thus, also, came to an end the nation of Judah. Nebuchadrezzar determined to put an end forever to all national activity in Judea. The chief priest and leading officials were taken to Riblah and put to death. Many were deported to Babylonia, but the bulk of the peasantry was left under the governorship of Gedaliah, who established his seat of government at Mizpah.

Gedaliah was a high-minded and brave man. He expended a great deal of energy and thought upon the promotion of the welfare of his people. He threw himself whole-heartedly into the work of reconstruction. But his life was unfortunately cut short by the jealous hand of a prince of the royal house of Judah, who assassinated him in 581 B. C.

During the early part of the period of Israel's maturity, Isaiah began his ministry. The Book of Isaiah as we have it is really a small library, or collec-

tion of books, the latest portions being much later than the time of Isaiah the son of Amoz.

We have passed in review the stirring historical times in which Isaiah lived. The moral and social conditions were worse, if possible, than those of the time of Amos and Hosea. Isaiah describes them very vividly in chapter five. Religion had become a mere matter of form. Jehovah was worshipped but in a very much perverted way. Idolatry was rampant. Ahaz had done much to encourage foreign religious ideas. A religious genius was needed to grapple with the intricate situation. The occasion called forth the man. The description of his call in chapter six gives an excellent idea of the character of the man. His was a strong and commanding personality, and back of that was a mind keen and alert, a heart full of the love of his fellow-man, and a soul whose vision of God was majestic and grand. The consuming passion of his life was the realization of the supernal holiness of God. When he was converted he beheld a vision of God which gripped him and lifted him above all selfish thought, making him bold and determined, and filling him with burning zeal for God.

Isaiah the son of Amoz was probably a nephew of king Amaziah. He was a resident of Jerusalem and may have been born there. He began his ministry in the year of Uzziah's death, 737, and ended it about 701 B. C. The general burden of his message was similar to that of his great predecessors, Amos and Hosea. His people had grievously sinned and must be punished. Jehovah was all-just, but he was also

all-merciful. Therefore a remnant would be left—a remnant consisting of those who would repent and turn from their evil way. Isaiah thus combined the characteristics of Jehovah declared by Amos and Hosea, but he also added a further note, namely, that of God's holiness—not a ritual or ceremonial holiness but a holiness which implied the absence of all moral imperfection and human limitations. Jehovah was morally and spiritually holy and would not brook sinfulness or imperfection in his people.

The first occasion which Isaiah had to manifest his confidence in Jehovah was during the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis of 735. The combined armies of Syria and Israel were approaching. Ahaz became alarmed and appealed to Assyria. Isaiah declared with almost divine confidence that there was no need of alarm if Judah trusted in Jehovah. But Ahaz was stubborn and, just as Isaiah had said, Judah became a vassal of the Assyrian king. For some time after this, the prophet lived quietly, determining to train up a body of young men who would help him and carry on his work after his death.

It was during the great Palestinian revolt of 703 that Isaiah delivered some of his finest prophecies. The western states determined to revolt against Assyria. In this they were encouraged by the Egyptian king. Isaiah, with his keen statesmanlike insight, saw, now that Judah was in vassalage to Assyria, that it was best for the time being for her to remain faithful to her promises. But his pleading was in vain. He was called a traitor. However, Judah revolted

and Sennacherib came and sacked the whole country except Jerusalem. Thus Jerusalem was spared, an event which gave rise to the doctrine of the inviolability of Jerusalem, a doctrine which would have substantiated the faith of a faithful people, but which only proved a snare to Judah. After 701 Isaiah apparently retired. Undoubtedly he was severely criticized, for, although the Assyrian came and sacked Judah, Jerusalem escaped, and to that extent Isaiah's prophecy of certain punishment was discounted. But punishment was to come and Isaiah was to be vindicated.

Isaiah was Judah's greatest prophet. He was a patient and painstaking organizer, a fearless preacher, a sane reformer, a keen statesman, a large-hearted champion, and an inspired and holy seer. As a teacher of pure religion he sought to impress upon the minds of his people that an adequate conception of the character of Jehovah was the best method of progress. He emphasized the divine holiness and majesty of God, he indicated the need of a moral and heart-felt devotion to God, and he condemned sin in all forms. As a statesman his fundamental conception was that of the nation's mission. The people of Judah were a specially chosen unit back of which was a holy God. They became sinful and broke their covenant relationship with God. But a remnant would repent and be restored after a time of persecution. That remnant would form the nucleus of a new kingdom—a kingdom of God, a Messianic Kingdom. This Messianic Kingdom will be purged of all sin, but will be earthly,

having its centre at Zion and ruled over by a descendant of the royal David. Isaiah's idea of a kingdom of peace, justice, and righteousness in the future gripped his time, but the people of Judah never realized it until it found fruition in the Christian Church. And there is another way in which the teaching of Isaiah foreshadowed the Church. Isaiah centred his hope for the future in the work of a small and faithful group of disciples. The foundation of such a little community was altogether a new thing in the world of religious ideas. It foreshadowed the idea of the *Ecclesia Docens*, the great Christian Church teaching men and leading men to God.

It was during the reign of Hezekiah and just before Sennacherib's invasion that Micah, a younger contemporary, and a peasant prophet, delivered his vigorous attacks upon the corruption of his time. He followed his great contemporary, Isaiah, in emphasizing the holiness of Jehovah, and declared that Jehovah deals with all men on the basis of ethical principles. The people of Judah were sinful, and in spite of their covenant relationship with Jehovah their punishment was certain and their doom would follow.

Micah was the last of four mighty minds who revolutionized religious thought. Never before in the history of religious thought were such forward strides made towards a truer understanding of God than during that short period from about 750 to 700 B. C. From crass polytheism, and, at the best, henotheism, to ethical monotheism; from mere religious ceremonialism to religious and spiritual morality; from a



narrow national ethic to a sense of international and universal righteousness and justice, human thinking turned by the teaching of these four great men. Their greatness is demonstrated, their work is eternal, and their inspiration lives in their divine messages to mankind.

Before the end of the reign of Hezekiah and during the reigns of Manasseh and Amon a strong anti-prophetic reaction was in swing. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah had had their day. They had been unsparing in their denunciation of sin of all kinds. Ordinarily a generation or so would be required for the reforms of such sweeping character as those suggested by our four prophets to be carried out. Instead of that Manasseh and Amon succeeded Hezekiah and a reaction ensued. Prophets were not wanting, but they were persecuted, punished, and driven to cover. However, Josiah came to the throne in 639 and a period of reform began. Then took place the discovery of the book of the law and its promulgation, and perhaps also the editing of the two earlier accounts of the history of the Hebrew people, the JE accounts.

Just previous to 626 B. C. the Scythians, a fierce and warlike people, began to pour down from the north. The whole of Western Asia was threatened. Judah's concern was voiced by Zephaniah, who saw in the new calamity the coming of the "Day of Jehovah", when the people of Judah would be punished for their sins. A few repentant people, he said, would be saved, but, for the rest, they would be annihilated. Nor

does he confine his message to Judah. All mankind would feel the terrors of the "Day of Jehovah", and in the end Jehovah's supremacy would be universally recognized.

About the same time began the ministry of a much greater man, namely, Jeremiah. He was the son of a priest, and began his prophetic work when he was very young. His call came in the thirteenth year of Josiah, in 626, and lasted till after the fall of Jerusalem in 586. His task was a severe one for his message was to be one of denunciation, judgment, and destruction. Being an exceedingly timid and emotional man, his ministry was a continual martyrdom. But in spite of all, his faith and trust in God never wavered.

Jeremiah's early sermons recall the fiery discourses of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. He attacked the flagrant corruption of his time, and declared that divine judgment was imminent. About this time came the discovery of the law book, and Jeremiah's zeal undoubtedly added much to the success of the reforms that were inaugurated. However, he does not refer directly to the details of reform as they were carried out. But he was exceedingly active during the Egyptian overlordship and immediately after the death of Josiah. Many of his prophecies date from this period. Reforms disappeared after Josiah's death, and old forms of worship reappeared. The popular belief that Jerusalem was inviolable had to be attacked, and Jeremiah strenuously denounced it as false, and preached the certainty of punishment

for sin. For this he was derided and persecuted, but he persisted.

Then came the fall of Nineveh in 606. This event was anticipated by the prophet Nahum's prediction. Nahum's message was also a warning to Israel. It was a scathing denunciation of Nineveh's sin in which Jehovah is described as a God of vengeance, but also of mercy to those who are repentant.

In Jehoiakim Jeremiah saw no hope, for Judah was as sinful and wilful as ever. Nor did Jehoiakin give any reason for confidence. There were prophets who cried peace, peace, where there was no peace, and these naturally opposed Jeremiah. To them and their words Jeremiah manifested the most uncompromising opposition. He denounced them as mercenary deceivers and immoral partisans. He fearlessly denounced the leaders of the people, and declared that Jerusalem would be captured. For this he was cast into prison and vigorously persecuted. But during it all Jeremiah proclaimed his confidence that after captivity the people of Judea would be allowed to return to their own home. Finally the city was captured in 586, and in 581 Gedaliah was murdered. Jeremiah, who in these later years enjoyed the confidence and reverence of the people, was now their only source of comfort. They turned to him for advice. But because of his faith in Jehovah, he counselled patience. This displeased the people and they took him with his scribe Baruch and fled to Egypt, where the prophet ended his days.

Jeremiah faced the most hopeless condition which

any Hebrew prophet knew. He had to preach certain doom, but in face of misunderstanding and persecution he never faltered. He denounced his people as sinful and self-righteous, but he believed and preached that after due punishment a New Jerusalem would be ushered in. A new covenant would be made and religion would be spiritualized. Jerusalem must fall, and thereby religion would be denationalized. Then would follow a spiritualization and individualization of religion. Herein consisted Jeremiah's real contribution to the history of religious thought. Formerly religion was a matter of the nation. The individual played an unimportant part. Jeremiah's solitude, his sensitive temperament, his personal meditations, led him to an appreciation of individual right and personal responsibility. With him the idea of individual religion began to take root and grow in Judah. Henceforth religion became more spiritual and more real.

The coming of Judah's doom was the occasion of one of the most interesting prophecies in the Old Testament. The thought of Jehovah's purpose to destroy Jerusalem was too much for Habakkuk. He could not understand how, if Judah was so precious to Jehovah, he could contemplate her destruction. The prophet is therefore led to question the divine providence. But like the author of the Book of Job, after due consideration, he comes to a clearer understanding of the situation. Judah has sinned. Jehovah was unquestionably just. He is merciful, and after Judah has duly suffered for her guilt, he

knows that Jehovah will reward her adequately. So the prophet counsels faith in the ways of Jehovah, knowing that he will do all things well, and that "the righteous shall live by his faith".

The Book of Obadiah was probably written shortly after the fall of Jerusalem, and is a denunciation of Edom's hostility to Judah during the crisis which resulted in the downfall of the kingdom of Judah. The prophet wrote with a twofold purpose, first, to announce judgment upon Edom, and secondly, to bring comfort and hope to his people. In setting forth these convictions he gives expression to the perfect character of Jehovah and to his belief in the certainty of a future kingdom of God which will be established in Zion, and of which holiness will be the chief characteristic.

The book of the prophet Ezekiel in part belongs to this period. Chapters one to twenty-four record the work of the prophet before the fall of Jerusalem, and in twenty-five to thirty-two are predictions against various nations, delivered near about 586. Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, was a priest. With the Hebrew captives he was taken to Babylonia in 597, and his call came five years after the exile, in 592. Up till 586 he was chiefly engaged in combatting the false idea that there was to be a speedy return from captivity. After that date discourses dwelt more and more upon the coming restoration. Then, after a period of silence, he composed a complete scheme for the establishment of a religious community in Palestine. Ezekiel's work was unique among the Hebrew prophets. Being un-

able to gather crowds in Babylonia he was obliged to work individually, and so became in a preëminent sense a pastor or "watchman". He was constantly consulted, and was ever ready with timely advice and instruction. The first portion of his book consists of discourses against the sin of Judah and warnings of punishment. After an account of his conversion and his call to the office of prophet, in which the sincere earnestness, the clear sense of duty, and the deep insight into the things of God are revealed, he gives warning of the impending fall of Judah and Jerusalem. But he is careful to declare that Jehovah's mercy will be found by those who seek it, a remnant will remain. In the sixth year of his exile he had a vision of the degrading idolatry that was practised in Jerusalem, in which he saw the occasion of the city's downfall. Jerusalem is ripe for chastisement. She is a vine ready to be cast into the fire. In the ninth year of his exile came his last oracle against Jerusalem in which the capture of the city is described in the form of a parable.

The external form of Ezekiel's messages is strange and often grotesque. But he was a clear and deep thinker. He revealed a noble conception of the character of God, associated it with insistence upon purity of thinking and living, and demanded an individual application of morality and religion.

The six prophets of the seventh century, while not as compact and complementary in their message as the four great prophets of the eighth century, nevertheless had this in common that they all built upon

the foundations of ethical monotheism laid by their predecessors. And it was a wonderfully firm foundation. Amos had told in vigorous language of the justice and righteousness of God, Hosea in words of tenderness and compassion of the love and mercy of God, and Isaiah and Micah in burning messages of pure thought of the majesty and holiness of God. And all four insisted upon a people who could and would reflect the character of God in a world of sin. Jeremiah, assuming all this, emphasized the need of a new covenant relationship between Judah and Jehovah, and enunciated his new and far-reaching doctrine of individualism; Zephaniah gave warning of the coming "Day of Jehovah" as a time of moral testing; Nahum emphasized the combined vengeance and mercy of God; Obadiah's was a message of comfort in the day of suffering; Habakkuk's words of faith were as bugle-notes from the midst of the fray and the great Ezekiel, in his tender-hearted way, ministered to his countrymen in their captivity, and, when the time came, knew how to inflame their hearts with a burning zeal and longing for their native land.

Of course, there were other great souls during this period who expressed themselves in permanent written form. There were historians and chroniclers, wise men and psalmists, who were moved by new religious ideas and felt their ideals expanding and their sense of personal responsibility quickened. We have the fruit of their labours in the Deuteronomic code, in the historical books of Samuel, in some of the Psalms

and perhaps in some of the Proverbs and in the Book of Lamentations. It was a great age. Israel and Judah had reached maturity. Some of their finest work was accomplished. They felt the realization of their youthful dreams, but with their sea of glass was mingled fire. All was not easy. They had their ups and downs, their struggles and wrestlings. But they became fit by growth and development for that function which has ever since characterized them as a preëminently religious people. Their place in the world was to point the way to God. During this period they became conscious of this great task and began a work which was destined to end only when men saw God face to face in the person of Jesus Christ.



## CHAPTER VII

### ISRAEL'S RIPENED MATURITY

Perhaps the most important period in the life of the Hebrew people was the stretch of four hundred and odd years between the fall of Jerusalem and the Maccabean establishment. It has turned out to be a real blessing to the world. Captivity of the chosen people took place during that period, and so did the destruction of the kingdom of Judah, but during the captivity and after the return the Jews did more in the realm of mind and spirit for the cause of true religion than any other people for any period whatsoever. During this period in Judaism the foundation and superstructure of Christianity were laid. The Maccabean and Roman periods furnished the opportunity for the completion of details, and Christianity brought life to it all and made it an eternally vital thing, but plan and form and structure were the work of Judaism.

In this chapter it will be a privilege to pass in review sublime prophecies and inspired religious poems. We shall learn to appreciate to some extent the contributions of Israel's most spiritual and most sublimely grand, though unnamed, prophet, the

prophet of the "Servant of Jehovah"; we shall witness the establishment of theocracy, the only real attempt to realize in actual, external form the Kingdom of God here and now; we shall become acquainted with some of the keenest and most penetrating attempts to solve many of the great moral and religious problems with which the mind of man has wrestled; and we shall witness the splendid way in which Israel, fully matured, met her baptism of blood and prepared herself to hand on to her posterity a priceless heritage.

The historical background of this period is very difficult to give in a condensed and abbreviated form. Jewish records are very scanty. The Book of Second Kings has only one or two details about this period. The Book of Daniel cannot be depended upon for historical details in spite of its great religious value. But Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and chapters 40-66 of the Book of Isaiah are very valuable, as are also certain Neo-Babylonian and Persian inscriptions, and some portions of certain Greek writers, such as Herodotus. The Elephantine Papyri are also useful, especially in a chronological and confirmatory way. The greatest sources, however, are the final part of Second Chronicles, together with Ezra and Nehemiah, these two books being an uninterrupted continuation of Second Chronicles.

After the destruction of Jerusalem the population of Judah was scattered and found a home in Babylonia and Egypt as well as in Judea. Those in Babylonia were settled by the canal Chebar; and those in Egypt settled in Tahpanhes, Migdol, Memphis, and

Pathros. In Babylonia the Jews were granted the greatest freedom in associating with the inhabitants, and the same was true of those in Egypt, who were later to be found in all parts of that country. Only the poorer and more ignorant of the Jews were left behind in Palestine, and these were ruled very harshly, as we gather from the Book of Lamentations. Moral and religious life was also at a very low ebb.

The exiles in Babylonia consisted of the best element of the Jewish people. They were fortunate in that the reigning king was Nebuchadrezzar, who was a great builder, a great statesman, and a patron of culture and progress. They were free to take part in the life of the country and many of them became capable and successful merchants. Nor was their religious life neglected. They had no temple, but they met together for instruction and prayer. One of the centres of such religious life was the home of the prophet Ezekiel. The Sabbath was observed by the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, and all this developed into the institution of the synagogue. But there were false prophets there as well as of old in Israel. They were, however, successfully combatted by Ezekiel. The Jews took a keen interest in literature and, following the example of literary Babylonians, they collected the ancient literature of their race, edited historical narratives, and began the codification of laws and legal precedents.

After a brilliant reign of forty-two years, in which he strengthened and beautified Babylon, made it practically impregnable, and reinstated the worship of

Marduk in all his glory, Nebuchadrezzar died. He was succeeded in 562 by a line of weak kings. First came Amel-Marduk, his son, the Evil-Merodach who liberated Jehoiakin; then Neriglissar, brother-in-law of Evil-Merodach, who slew Evil-Merodach in 559, and who, as an officer of Nebuchadrezzar, had directed the capture of Jerusalem in 586; then after a few months' reign of his son Labashi-Marduk, the last Babylonian king began his reign in the person of a prince of Babylonia, a candidate of the priestly party, Nabonidus. Nabonidus was a great religious and literary man, but no soldier. The more practical affairs of state were entrusted to his son, Belshazzar, who, though never crowned king of Babylonia, was actual king indeed.

By the time of Nebuchadrezzar, the Medes under the leadership of Cyaxares had gained control of the whole northwestern Asia as far as the river Halys. There they were halted by the Lydians in 585 under Alyattes III. Croesus succeeded Alyattes in 560, and Astyages succeeded Cyaxares in 584. About the same time another great man appeared on the scene, namely, Cyrus the Persian, who first came to light as the king of Anshan in southern Elam. War broke out between Astyages and Cyrus which resulted in an easy victory for the latter. Cyrus thus became ruler of the Median empire in 549. He then passed victoriously through Mesopotamia, and going westward defeated Croesus and captured Sardis. Meanwhile Nabonidus was engaged in his favourite study of archaeology. He was unconscious of the seriousness

of the impending danger. Belshazzar was placed in military command but no special preparations were made to fortify the city or the country. In 539 Cyrus was not far off. Nabonidus heard of his approach and feverously began to prepare his resistance. But Sippar was taken without a blow, and early in 538 the vanguard of Cyrus was before the walls of Babylon. Very soon the commander of the armies of Cyrus, Gobrias, took the city and captured the king. Thus came to an end the mighty empire of Babylon which for almost two thousand years had held sway in Western Asia. Cyrus made Babylonia an associate kingdom and had Cambyases, his son, crowned as king and recognized as such by the great Babylonian god Marduk.

In accordance with the just, humane, and strong policy of Cyrus, captive peoples were permitted to return to their own homes if they so desired and, whether they returned or not, they were allowed to worship their own gods in their own way. Consequently, the same year in which Babylon was taken saw an exodus of the Jews bound for Judea. Cyrus gave them every aid and even appointed an imperial officer as their governor. Sheshbazzar however was soon succeeded by Zerubbabel, under whose direction work was very soon begun on the temple. At any rate, the altar of burnt offering was quickly repaired and regular evening and morning oblations were resumed. But the temple was not restored at once, nor for some years afterwards, for the burden of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 is the neces-

sity of restoring the temple in order that Jehovah might come and take up his abode in it. The work may well have been begun soon after the return, but the chances are that it was soon suspended because of want of means and religious lukewarmness. However, the temple was fully restored by 516 (Haggai 1:1; Ezra 6:15).

Cyrus died in 529 and was succeeded by Cambyses, who conquered Egypt in 525 and reigned until 522. After him a period of anarchy prevailed until 519 when Darius, the son-in-law of Cyrus, after three years of hard work, brought about tranquility. It was during these troublesome years that Haggai and Zechariah were delivering their message in Judea and declaring that the restored temple in Jerusalem was destined to become the religious centre of the world. The effect was gratifying, for in 520 the work was vigorously begun and the temple was complete by 516.

From 516 to about 455 records are very scanty. Darius I after a brilliant reign was succeeded by Xerxes I in 485, and then followed the long reign of Artaxerxes from 464 to 424, during whose time Nehemiah was active, as seems to be made clear by a study of the Elephantine Papyri. In the first papyrus we learn that a petition from the Jews of Elephantine in Egypt was sent to Bagoas, Persian governor of Judea. Josephus connects Bagoas with Artaxerxes, the name of the Persian king who commissioned Nehemiah. Further, Eliashib, the high priest in Jerusalem, was a contemporary of Nehemiah. He was also grandfather of the Johanan of Neh. 12:22

who is the same as the high priest Jehohanan of the first papyrus. Now, the first papyrus was written in the 17th year of Darius. On account of the late nature of the script that could not have been Darius I. It could not have been Darius III for he reigned only five years. It must therefore have been Darius II who reigned from 424-404 B. C. Consequently the date of the letter, being in the seventeenth year of Darius II, must have been 407 B. C. Now, since, as we have already seen, Eliashib, contemporary of Nehemiah, was grandfather of Johanan, the Jehohanan of the Elephantine papyri, Nehemiah must have lived a considerable number of years earlier than the date of the papyrus in which Jehohanan is mentioned as a contemporary. We know that Nehemiah was commissioned by Artaxerxes (Neh. 2:1), who was Artaxerxes I or Artaxerxes II. Artaxerxes II would be too late, therefore Nehemiah must have been commissioned by Artaxerxes I, 464-424. In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I, that is, in 445, Nehemiah made his first visit to Palestine.

One cannot read the touching story of Nehemiah's appeal to Artaxerxes for permission to go to Palestine to undertake a great work without a feeling of admiration for the great man. And when his later career is followed that admiration is increased. He was given a commission as governor of Jerusalem and immediately set out upon his great task. His first efforts were strenuously but foolishly opposed by Sanballat, Tobiah, Shemaiah and others. But Nehemiah triumphed over it all. They mocked and derided

him, they threatened him with violence and tried to entrap him by treachery, but all to no purpose. Nehemiah was more than their match, and in fifty-two days' time the walls of the city were restored. Nor did the influence of Persian officials in Samaria with Artaxerxes defeat Nehemiah's plans. The work of rebuilding was indeed ordered to stop by Artaxerxes, but only after the walls were completed and ready for dedication.

No sooner was the work of rebuilding finished than Nehemiah placed the city in charge of a special governor, Hananiah, gave orders for the re-dedication of the walls, and for necessary reforms in government, and set out for Persia to answer charges made against him by his enemies. But he returned again in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, that is, in 432, and vigorously carried out certain necessary reforms against slavery, against the taking of interest, against intermarriage, about the revenues of the temple and the giving of tithes, and about the reform of the Sabbath. Nehemiah was the incarnation of vigorous patriotism, practical efficiency, religious zeal, and of spirituality, farsightedness, and friendliness.

The reforms of Ezra must have taken place later than the time of Nehemiah, for Ezra found the walls already built (Ezra 9:9) and the sacred city was well populated, but not cleansed of foreigners (Ezra 9:1-3). But according to Ezra 7:8, Ezra came in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, while Nehemiah came in the twentieth year of the same monarch. It is thought that the later priestly writer deliberately made Ezra



antedate Nehemiah, that the number thirty has dropped out of the original text, making seven instead of thirty-seven, or that the Artaxerxes was Artaxerxes II, 404-358. In case thirty was lost from the text the date of Ezra would be 427, but if the king were Artaxerxes II his date would be 398. If, also, "Jehohan son of Eliashib" to whose room Ezra retired after his speech (Ezra 10:6) be, as we have seen above, the grandson of Eliashib, and if he were high priest at the time, the date 398 would be more likely. It is natural that, being in doubt about the sequence, the priestly writer should have made Ezra precede Nehemiah, for Ezra was a priest and Nehemiah a layman, and in this way perhaps we have the confusion in order in our present sources. But whichever came first the results remain practically the same.

Ezra's great work was to be the establishment of a new covenant relationship between Jehovah and his people. He was convinced that ethical teaching, in itself good, was not sufficient to bind his people to God. There must be rule and regulation, precept and law. These he had laboured for many years to collect and codify, and now the time was come for their proclamation. And so, on the Feast of the New Moon, the first day of the seventh month, afterwards known as the Feast of Trumpets, or the Day of Holy Convocation, Ezra gathered together the whole people and for hours at a time read the law while attendant Levites expounded it to the people. It was a thrilling event, one never to be forgotten. A wave of joy and

gladness swept the vast company. Some were moved to tears. The whole nation re-dedicated itself anew to Jehovah and pledged themselves to his service. They agreed to obey the law, especially in the matter of abstaining from all intermarriage with the heathen, observing the Sabbath, observing the Sabbatical year, and in properly providing for the temple and its priesthood. The law which was proclaimed on this great occasion was the Priestly Code, with the exception of a few later changes, and the meeting of the people was the beginning of the Great Assembly.

It was during the administration of Nehemiah that the Samaritan schism began, on account of his opposition to intermarriage with foreigners. The schism became complete after the promulgation of the law under Ezra, and by about 400 B. C. the Samaritans were permanently settled around Gerazim, where a temple was built, which lasted until 130 B. C. when it was destroyed by John Hyrcanus. The Samaritans adopted the Law with some changes, and an abbreviated edition of Joshua. But there were zealous Jews who opposed the law against intermarriage. Such an one was the author of the Book of Ruth, which was written about this time to show that even the great David was a descendant of a foreign woman, a Moabitess.

From the time of Ezra to the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great very little is known about the affairs of Judea. Artaxerxes II, 404-358, was too pre-occupied and too weak to take any interest in Judea. Many Jews during his reign returned. Ar-

taxerxes III, 358-337, was defeated by the Egyptians in 350. This was the occasion of a rebellion in Syria with which Judea sympathized. Artaxerxes crushed the rebellion in 346, and it is perhaps in connection with a probable expedition through Palestine that the Book of Judith deals. The last Persian king, Darius III, 335-331, was completely defeated by Alexander at Arbela in 331 B. C. During all this period the real rulers in Judea were the high priests Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, the last named being a contemporary of Alexander the Great.

One year after Alexander's death in the East, Ptolemy I, son of Lagus, became king of Egypt, 322-285, and immediately set out to bring Palestine under his dominion. He met and defeated the Jews, according to Josephus, on a Sabbath, 320, and ruled Palestine till 315. But his rule was constantly challenged by the kings of Syria, until Antigonus finally seized Palestine in 315 and retained it till 312, and Jerusalem till 301. At the battle of Ipsus in 301, Antigonus was slain, and Ptolemy I and his successors remained in control of Palestine for the next century.

The political decline of the Ptolomies began with the accession of Ptolemy IV. His rival was Antiochus III (the Great), 223-187, and by 218 Antiochus was master of Syria and Palestine, although a reverse at the battle of Raphia kept him out of Palestine till the death of Ptolemy IV in 205. The Egyptians were decisively defeated by Antiochus in 198, and the Syrian king began by diplomacy to win the hearts of the Jews.

In 175 Seleucus IV, the son of Antiochus the Great, was succeeded by his brother, Antiochus Epiphanes, 175-164, in whose reign the supreme crisis of Judaism took place. This strange, unscrupulous man set his heart upon the extermination of what he considered to be a Jewish obsession—their religion. This was a part of his larger scheme, namely, to oppose Hellenism to the advancing Roman civilization. He, accordingly, deposed the high priest, Onias III, and put Jason, a Hellenizer and brother of Onias, in his place. Jason was a faithful follower of Antiochus, and on the latter's return from an expedition to Egypt in 170, he turned the city of Jerusalem over to the soldiers of Antiochus to spoil. On his return from a second expedition to Egypt in 168, Antiochus Epiphanes sent his general Apollonius to put an end to the worship of Jehovah. The walls of the city were torn down, the Acra was fortified with Syrian troops, and an altar to Zeus Olympus was set up in the temple.

Soldiers of Antiochus Epiphanes were given a free hand in Judea, and Judaism seemed for the moment to be doomed. Leaders of the Jews everywhere were being forced to sacrifice to the Greek gods. At last the little town of Modein, between Jerusalem and Joppa, furnished a hero against this tyrant. It was an aged priest of the order of Joarib, Mattathias by name. He with his five sons, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan, refused to recant and raised the standard of revolt, to which the Pious or Chasids joined themselves. Their resistance was successful.

When Mattathias died in 167, he was succeeded by his son Judas, who was called the Maccabee. Judas slew Apollonius, the Syrian general, and vanquished Seron, his successor, at Beth-horon. A large army under Ptolemy, Nicanor, and Gorgias was now sent, but they were defeated at Emmaus. At last Lysias, who was vice-regent while Antiochus Epiphanes was away at war with the Parthians, appeared at the head of a large army. This also Judas met and defeated at Bethzur in 165 B. C. This was a great moment for Judaism. The first and second Books of the Maccabees give us a vivid picture of the extent to which Antiochus Epiphanes had gone to break the spirit of the Jews. They were persecuted by all known means. Their life and their religion were threatened with extinction. But they never faltered for a moment in their purpose to defend not only their life but also their religious liberty. Consequently, the defeat of Lysias in 165 was for them the supreme moment in their history. Judas returned from battle and immediately proceeded to the temple in Jerusalem, which he restored and cleansed on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month (December), 165 B. C. For ever afterwards the day has been remembered as the Feast of Dedication, or Feast of Lights.

Let us turn back now and see the real life of the Jews in this period of ripened maturity, this time of mental and moral productivity. The earliest great mind in this period of Judah's life was the prophet Ezekiel. In the second part of his book, he sees the cause of the failure of the teaching of the earlier

prophets in the inability of the people to grasp their abstract teaching and in the insufficiency of morals and ethics as the sum and substance of religion. He, therefore, is at pains to map out a scheme for the establishment of a theocracy in the promised land, where people will be sustained in their holiness by precept, teaching, and law. He pictures a Kingdom of God in its final and perfect state. The fundamental ideas in his teaching about Jehovah and the people's relation to him are: The Glory and Name of Jehovah, representing him as an universal god, and as manifesting himself in the world of external nature as well as in human nature; the holiness of Jehovah indicative of his moral perfection as the goal of human endeavour; the expression of the idea of moral freedom and individual responsibility in which we have the thought expressed by Jeremiah more fully worked out and developed, and in which we see one of the most important turning points in the history of Jewish religion; and, finally, the adjustment of the undue emphasis which his predecessors had placed upon the ability of man to please God by means of moral force alone, rather than the combination of both the sacrificial system and morality of living in a religion which is pleasing to God. He perceived that a religion of morals alone may become weak and emaciated without the virility and strengthening power of sacrifice.

The pre-exilic prophets were the Puritans of the Hebrews. Sacrifices and offerings had offended them; they had come for the first time in history to ap-

preciate the significance of pure righteousness and justice, of love and mercy, and, like all enthusiasts, they were in danger of losing a right perspective in religion. But the pendulum began to swing back after the exile, beginning with Ezekiel, and in Isaiah 40-55 we have a further emphatic insistence upon the necessity of sacrificial ideas as true elements in a natural religion. After defining again the true character of Jehovah, Second Isaiah deals in chapters 49-55 with the character of the Servant of Jehovah, his mission, and glorification of Zion. In doing so, the prophet clearly sets forth the necessity of sacrifice on the part of Israel before reconciliation with Jehovah can be brought about. Sacrifice is necessary on the part of every sinner before reconciliation can be realized. The Servant must be humbled and must suffer before he can be exalted. Trito-Isaiah adds to this by emphasizing the externals of religion as a necessary adjunct to the idea of sacrifice, the two being the one side—morality being the other—of a complete religious act. In other words, both these great prophets realized that sacrifice, involving the idea of surrender and suffering, is an essential element, along with morality and other elements, that goes to make up the complete idea of worship, and worship is an essential element in all true religion.

Second Isaiah also distinguished himself in the fact that he stated in a forceful and comprehensive way the sole deity of Jehovah. Isaiah's predecessors had proclaimed the oneness and universality of Jehovah, but this prophet took pains to disprove the reality

of all other gods but Jehovah. He definitely, for the first time, denied the very existence of other gods. Nor does any other prophet describe the glories of the Messianic age as vividly as does Isaiah. The spiritual restoration of Israel is what he looks forward to, and that will mark the inauguration of a new age—an age of universal salvation in which all nations will share in the blessings that flow from the knowledge of the true God. A new heavens and a new earth will be established with Jerusalem as the centre, to which all nations of the earth will come with their gifts. And then Trito-Isaiah introduces a new idea—the idea of mediatorship. Israel will be the priestly mediator between Jehovah and the nations (61: 5-6). She will lead all men to God. Thus the Second and Third Isaiah together with Ezekiel introduced an element of real practical religion and a warmth of religious reality which were lacking in the teachings of their predecessors. Ezekiel's insistence upon the externals of religion served to place religion upon a basis possible of attainment by the average human being, and Isaiah's emphasis upon the elements of sacrifice, of suffering, and of service made it more real and tangible. And together with that, the idea of Jehovah's sole deity gave their teaching an air of universality which belongs to a religion capable of satisfying all men.

Prophetic teaching reaches its highest point in the splendid messages of the Isaiahs, and the religious teaching of the Old Testament finds its best expression of the character of God in these sublime chapters of



the prince of Hebrew prophets. No praise can be too extravagant of the beauty and grandeur of those noble prophetic passages that treat of Jehovah's omnipotence, of his plans for all mankind, of his free use of world rulers as his agents, of his gracious love towards Israel, of his universal purpose in Israel's missionary character, of his plan to evangelize the world through Israel, of the great destiny he has in store for the true Israel, and of the great and glorious purpose which he entertains for the future of the whole world. This, together with the prophets' sublime doctrines of mediation, sacrifice, and service, reaches a very high point in the development of the mental and spiritual life of the Jewish people.

Haggai and Zechariah, next to Nehemiah, were more responsible than any in bringing about the restoration of the temple and the possibility of putting into operation the complete ideas of religious worship formulated by Ezekiel. For while religion without morality is impracticable and unreal, religion without worship is weak and thin and ineffective. With the restoration of the temple and temple services the Jews began again their normal religious life with a reasonable hope of effective progress.

During the period under consideration several great movements were inaugurated which afterwards characterized Judaism. There was the establishment of a legalistic form of religion. The learned men of the exilic period acquired a passion for order and definiteness, and on their return all their energies were concentrated on the formulating of a code of religious

regulations which, they expected, would keep their people holy and acceptable to Jehovah. Thus, they reasoned, they would be able to establish a real theocracy in the land and maintain it perpetually. An opposite, but parallel and sometimes synonymous movement, was the result of an emphasis upon the future. Now that the nation was destroyed, men began to look more and more into the future for the ideal. The nation was destroyed because of sin; but sin having been atoned for by suffering, a new nation would be called into existence where sin and suffering would be eliminated. There Jehovah himself or an ideal descendant of the royal house of David would reign, and peace and prosperity would multiply. There also the temple and its services would express the people's true worship of Jehovah. This movement was the beginning of that apocalyptic teaching which became so common during the second and first centuries before Christ. Then there was a third movement in the Judaism of this period, namely, a growing sense of the aloofness of Jehovah. That was due to the emphasis that was placed upon his holiness. Being holy, it became more and more difficult for ordinary beings to approach him, and it also became harder for people to think of him as being associated with any sin or imperfection whatever. There thus began to grow up in the people's minds the necessity of a dualistic conception of God and his dealings with men. This was helped on by contact with Persian dualistic theology. The result was that a doctrine of mediatorial beings arose. Thus Jehovah

was removed further and further from his universe, and the gulf was bridged by angelic beings.

The establishment of a legalistic form of religion had its drawbacks, for its tendency was towards empty formalism. Against this protest was not wanting. Malachi stands between the earlier prophet and the ritualistic priest. He wants ritual, but it must be associated with morality and a true conception of the character of Jehovah. His emphasis upon repentance and spirituality finds an echo in another book of this period, the prophecy of Joel.

Along with the two great camps of religious thought in Judaism, legalism and ethical culture, many of the keenest minds of the time exercised themselves with deep and knotty problems. There was the problem of the suffering of the righteous and the providence of God. Habakkuk had touched upon this problem. Now it was to be handled in a masterly manner by the author of the Book of Job. The idea of resurrection and rewards and punishments in a future world had not yet been formulated. The whole drama of mankind was to be played out here now. But the righteous were being called upon to suffer beyond anything that a doctrine of vicarious suffering could satisfactorily explain. This was the problem which many felt themselves called upon to investigate. But, alas, without very great results, for the present. Habakkuk had recommended great faith in Jehovah. Nor could the author of Job go further. A new world of religious ideas had to dawn before a more satisfactory solution could be found. But it

was bound to come, and especially as a result of contact with Hellenistic thought, although the Jew himself would probably have reached the same conclusions unaided, though more slowly and gradually. This new world we shall have occasion to study in our next chapter.

Meanwhile, the Jews of pre-Hellenic days were not intellectually idle. There was the study of the law and the collection, expansion, and interpretation of the sayings of the wise. This took the form of philosophic investigations. The great religious problem of the time was the providence of God. His existence was never questioned. But how to know his will and purpose exercised the keenest Jewish thought. And it was universally conceded that the road to a knowledge of God's will and purpose, that is, to wisdom, is to fear him and to love him. The authors of the Book of Proverbs and the Book of Ecclesiasticus made this very clear. The sphere of philosophy is to know God, and the great text-book in that pursuit is God's own law as codified by sage and priest. But here and there scepticism was found. There were those who faltered in their pursuit of happiness and the knowledge of God, and who, while not denying the providence of God, yet discouraged undue concern and worry about it. Such an one was the author of Ecclesiastes, who concluded that life was a hopeless round, with nothing left over for a future life.

This welter of religious thought had the effect of weakening confidence in prophetic utterances, with the result that a new class of writers began to come

into vogue. These were thinkers who put forth their philosophy of God and of life in the form of visions and dreams, of hidden and cryptic discourses. Such were the writers of Isaiah 24-27 and Zech. 9-14, who were mainly occupied with the future, the reward of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked.

Men of all types and shades of opinion were eager to add their mite to the expression of the ever-changing chain of religious thought of the age. There were men of the old school, conservative, and reactionary, opposed to whom were men of God with deep and clear insight into God's ways, such as the author of the Book of Jonah, who believed that Jehovah's message was for all mankind; and there were deeply reverent hearts, like the authors of Psalms 121 or 125 and many other of these divinely inspired lyrics, who heard God speaking to their hearts and had the power of transmitting his message to a perplexed world. There were intolerant nationalists such as the author of Zechariah 14, and strict legalists; there were scribes and wise men. But everywhere men were conscious that they were living in a great age—an age of new awakening, an age of broadening vision, an age of deeper insight into the ways of God with man. And then came the greatest testing-time of all. All that Jews held dear and sacred became the object of a powerful man's hate. Antiochus Epiphanes determined to force Hellenism upon the Jews. He saw in the religion of Jehovah a stumbling-block in his way, and his fury knew no bounds. With fiendish energy he began his terrible work. But he had not counted

upon the spirit of the Jewish people. Pleasantly agreeing to differ before in matters of religion that seemed to be in the melting-pot they came to bay before this godless tyrant. At once their superficial differences were forgotten and under the leadership of Mattathias and his courageous son, Judas, they proved to the world, once for all, that there was among them plenty of the stuff whereof martyrs are made. It was not only their baptism of blood, but it crystallized Judaism and made it henceforth a definite thing.

Thus we have learned to see in the period of Israel's ripened maturity a time when Israel, full-grown, with all the experience of youth and maturity, rejoices in her strength, testing her newly-found powers, and sharpening her intellect and spiritual insight upon philosophical and religious problems that had never yet been solved. Israel was at the summit of her mental and spiritual development, and she was drinking to the full her cup of spiritual happiness. She had completed the codification of her religious law, she had turned around to view her own history from the very beginning and record it, she had brought all her laws, her narratives, and the prophecies together, and in her great struggle against the heathen Antiochus she put her official stamp of approval upon these great literary works to hand them on to her posterity. And all this was the work of her priests and scribes—two parties in Judaism which were originally one, but which gradually differentiated, the one from the other, the priests becoming the aristocratic guardians of the temple and its activities which,

since the time of Josiah, were concentrated in Jerusalem, and the other specializing more and more in the study and interpretation of the Torah, which was so magnificently set forth by Ezra and the Great Assembly. We shall find these two classes further differentiated in our next period, but for the time being, and especially due to the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, they blended in one supreme effort to preserve Judaism and its religion. Had they not, the whole history of modern religious thought might have been far different. At any rate the coming of the "fulness of time" would most likely have been very much postponed. But Israel was true to her nature, her religious heritage was preserved, the gift which she was preparing for the world was made more precious, and her heroism saved her for the day when from her should spring the "Light of the World" and the "Saviour of Mankind".

## CHAPTER VIII

### ISRAEL'S RESIDUARY GIFTS

After the ripened maturity of full age, comes the period of gradual preparation to surrender the full-grown fruits of toil and thought to posterity. Israel reached the summit of self-realization at the beginning of the Maccabean period. From that time till the rise of Christianity, she seemed to feel that her best work was being done in preparation for the rebirth of her own spiritual gifts in a form much higher and fuller than that for which she was destined; from that time till the ministry of the Divine Messiah she seems to have felt that she must decrease, but that her faith and religious heritage would increase with a strength and power not of this world, and from that time until the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. Judaism was being transformed, invisibly but surely, into Christianity, the religion of the true Israel, the gift of the Jew.

The last great period of Israel's life as a nation began among stirring events. Antiochus Epiphanes had just defamed his name by a needless desecration of all that the Jews held dear, and Judas, the valiant son of Mattathias, was on the road to victory. It was



during these eventful days that a Jewish patriot, fearing to speak in his own name lest he would not be heeded, placed in the mouth of an ancient worthy, a man famous for his wisdom, a description of the inevitable destiny which Jehovah had marked out for the nations of the world. His message was one of comfort and courage, for he reminded his hearers that after the passing away of all the great nations of the world, that of Antiochus Epiphanes being the last and worst, God's kingdom would be ushered in. The people of that kingdom were to be the Saints of the Most High, the Children of Israel. There was need for this message. Antiochus Epiphanes was so far successful, and Judas had not yet prevailed. There was danger of surrender, in which case all would be lost. Already many Jews had sacrificed their religion to their physical safety, one of them being brother of the high priest himself. But the author of the Book of Daniel inspired his compatriots to endure a little longer. Many Jews were being slaughtered, but if necessary Jehovah was able to raise them from the dead to partake in the coming Kingdom of God. In fact, he felt convinced of that truth. And not only would such be raised from the dead to enjoy this great event, but the very wicked would be brought back from the grave to receive their due recompense for their sins. Another, and a like-minded Jew, the author of Enoch 83-90, went even further and described a great world-judgment which, he declared, would very soon be ushered in, when persecuted Israel would be rewarded.

Never before in the history of Hebrew thought was the idea of a resurrection expressed. But these men were driven to formulate such a doctrine, for Israel was being persecuted to distraction, and without a resurrection there was no possibility that she could ever be rewarded for her courage and fortitude. "Necessity is the mother of invention". Necessity forced Hebrew thought into the belief in a resurrection of the dead, and once that belief was formulated and expressed, it seemed the most natural thing possible. With this great hope in their breasts, the Jews could laugh their persecutors to scorn. The belief was no doubt a notable factor in the success which Judas achieved and which culminated in the re-dedication of the temple in 165 B. C.

The result of danger in this perilous period was to turn men's minds towards the future, and from now on Jewish literature is packed full of schemes of future blessedness. On the other hand, much bigotry and hatred were engendered among the Jews against the persecuting and hated Gentile, such as is exhibited in the Books of Esther and Tobit, but fortunately this was limited, and the Books of Daniel, Enoch, Wisdom, etc., are more characteristic of what the nature of religious thought was.

Judas was a born leader. Within a few years of the defeat of the army of Antiochus Epiphanes, Judas had gained by conquest a kingdom much larger than that of David, and had forced Antiochus V, son and successor of Antiochus Epiphanes, to make a treaty with him. But Antiochus V retained command of

the Acra and appointed Alcimus, a Hellenizing Jew, as high priest. This displeased Judas, and war again broke out. The Syrians sent a large army under Bacchides into Palestine, and the eight hundred followers of Judas were overwhelmed and Judas himself was slain. Thus passed a great and noble soul. The Jews never forgot him, for he had led them during the most trying crisis of their history, he had established religious freedom for them, and he had left an example of true religious patriotism which proved to be a lasting inspiration.

The people immediately, in 161, selected Jonathan, the brother of Judas, but he was forced to remain away from Jerusalem until, on the death of Alcimus and repeated military failures of Bacchides, he was in a position to conclude a treaty with Bacchides. From Michmash as his headquarters, Jonathan now began to spar for favour, and by 153 he succeeded in being received and recognized at the Syrian court. This was primarily due to internal strife in Syria, where an adventurer, Alexander Balas of Smyrna, was opposing Demetrius I as successor of Antiochus V. Jonathan played his game well, for both candidates for the Syrian throne sought his favour. But when Demetrius was slain in 150, Jonathan espoused the cause of Alexander until Alexander's death in 145, when Demetrius II became king. But intrigues progressed in Syria, now between Tryphon, another adventurer, and Demetrius II. Tryphon was successful and turned against Jonathan, confining him in prison at Ptolemais, where he murdered him in 143.

Simon, another brother of Jonathan, now stepped forward, espoused the cause of Demetrius II, and made a treaty with him in the same year. One of the provisions of the treaty was the independence of Judah from Syria. This event ushered in an important epoch in Jewish history.

From the accession of Simon as king of the Jews and high priest until the coming of the Romans under Pompey in 63 B. C., Judah was an independent kingdom. The Cycle of Simon began, coins were issued by his government, and foreign tribute ceased. Simon captured the citadel in 141, and a reign of peace was ushered in. The army was placed under the command of Simon's son, John. Perhaps the most significant act of Simon's reign was the sending of an embassy to Rome, the result of which was Rome's recognition of Judah's independence, although, as later history proved, Rome was not altogether disinterested. After defeating the Syrians, who were still meddling in Jewish affairs, Simon reigned peacefully till his death by treachery at Docus near Jericho by the hand of his son-in-law, Ptolemy, son of Abubus.

To the peaceful reign of Simon, or to the early years of the reign of his successor, it is tempting to ascribe the latest psalms in the Psalter. It was a time of reflection and we shall not be far wrong in assigning such psalms as the 110th to this great peaceful time, when men were thinking hopefully of the coming golden era and its Messianic king.

John Hyrcanus succeeded Simon in 135 and reigned till 105. His rule was a vigorous and prosperous one.

Having defeated the Syrians early in his reign, he turned his attention to expanding his kingdom. Among other small surrounding nations, he defeated the Samaritans and destroyed their temple. Before the end of his reign his kingdom extended as far north as Carmel, and southward to the desert, eastward to Gilead, and westward to the Mediterranean.

It was during the reign of the warlike Hyrcanus that time was given at home for the development of internal strife and the growth of political and religious parties. With the growth of political power the Maccabees became more and more worldly, and the "Pious", or Chasids, became more and more opposed to the ruling house. At last the break came, and the "Pious" formed a party opposed to political aggrandisement, and called themselves the "Separatists" or Pharisees. They were essentially a religious party who spent their energies and resources on the teaching and interpretation of the Torah. They wished to develop a holy people acceptable to a holy God. They wished to prepare for the coming of the Messiah, and his spiritual and religious kingdom.

Opposed to the Pharisees were the Sadducees, who took their name from Zadok, the priest of David. They were priestly, aristocratic, and political; they refused the interpretations of the Torah and all oral tradition; they rejected the new doctrines of resurrection and retribution in the next world, and opposed the Pharisees in their doctrine of angels and evil spirits.

Different from both these great parties was the sect

of the Essenes. They probably represented a reformation in Pharisaism. They held themselves aloof from religious and secular life, adopting a simple, orderly, and prayerful life. They were probably very much influenced by a certain type of Greek thought, emphasizing the belief in the pre-existence of the soul, immortality, and the providence of God. They never became very numerous, and soon died out or were assimilated into Christian monasticism.

Another important event of this period was the probable completion of the translation of the Old Testament into Greek. The work had been begun as early as the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, about 250. It was done in Alexandria, gradually, according as Jewish writings were put forth. But the final acceptance of the Old Testament as canonical, or binding authoritatively, probably did not take place until the Council of Jamnia in 90 A. D.

On the death of John Hyrcanus in 105, the government was left to his wife, Alexandra, and his eldest son, Aristobulus, was made high priest. But Aristobulus seized his mother, imprisoned her, and assumed the title of king. He was a despot, and ruled despotically until his death in 104. He was succeeded by his brother Alexander Jannaeus, who immediately released his step-mother, Alexandra, and married her. But Jannaeus was a natural warrior, and affairs of state fell into the hands of his queen. Alexandra was a Pharisee, and for a while many of the Pharisees were tempted to political intrigues, but on the whole their part in public affairs was much to their credit.

Simon ben Shetach, brother of Alexandra, introduced elementary schools, developed them in connection with the synagogue, and entrusted the education of the youth to the scribes. Queen Alexandra herself brought about the reorganization of the Great Assembly, under the name of the Sanhedrin, and admitted scribes to its membership. Meanwhile Jannaeus died while besieging Ragaba, and from 78 till 69, Alexandra reigned alone, the high priesthood being given to Hyrcanus II, son of Alexandra and Alexander Jannaeus. On her death a dispute arose between Hyrcanus II and his brother Aristobulus as to who should be ruler. Aristobulus was assisted in his claim by Antipater, governor of Idumea, and Hyrcanus gained the support of Aretas of Arabia. Aristobulus was defeated and Hyrcanus II was left in control. Meanwhile in 88 B. C. the Asiatic provinces of Rome, under Mithridates, king of Pontus, revolted. At first Scylla was sent, and then in 66 B. C. Pompey came and began to organize that part of the empire. While at Damascus Pompey's general, Scaurus, was sent to Jerusalem where civil war was waged between the followers of Aristobulus and those of Hyrcanus II. Scaurus sided with Aristobulus. In 63 B. C. the Pharisees sent ambassadors to Pompey, at Damascus, and told him they were willing to do all in their power to aid a Roman invasion provided their religious liberties were not interfered with. Pompey promptly sent an army, captured Jerusalem and all its outlying provinces, appointed an "Ethnarch" instead of a king, reinstated Hyrcanus II as high priest,

and imposed a tribute upon the nation. Once again political independence was lost, and chiefly because the Pharisees, the most numerous Jewish party, had no political ambitions but were impelled by a love of Judaism and a desire to preserve the worship of Jehovah pure and uncontaminated.

While all these struggles were going on at home, the lovers of Judaism realized the growing power of Hellenism and strained every nerve to make Judaism acceptable to the outside world while strengthening it apologetically for their own people. Thus the Jews had translated their own sacred books into Greek, Demetrius presented Jewish history in attractive form, Aristobulus tried to harmonize Jewish and Greek philosophical conceptions, and other Jewish scholars wrote Sibylline Oracles which were read by the whole learned world of that day. Another Jew, in Egypt, wrote the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, presenting Jewish religious thought in Hellenic form. Others wrote much apocalyptic literature, giving expression to their hope and faith in the future of Jehovah's chosen people, and making a strong bid for Greek consideration. The result of all this effort was to broaden Jewish culture, develop racial loyalty, and deepen religious convictions.

In 63 B. C. Roman overlordship was established in Judea and authority passed from the Jews of the Hasmonean family to the Romans and their representatives Antipater, the Idumean, and his family. Pompey established a system of free cities, which was a blessing, and the Pharisees devoted themselves to a



study of the Torah. When Pompey left the east he made Gabinius pro-consul of Syria. Trouble arose between Hyrcanus II and Alexander, son of Aristobulus, whereupon Gabinius deprived Hyrcanus of all power except the care of the temple, divided the country into five districts, and created a council for each district. Each council was responsible to the pro-consul, and Antipater was the real power in Judea. After the Triumvirate in Rome and the following civil war and the defeat of Pompey in 48 on the plains of Pharsalia, Caesar became lord of the east and reinstated Hyrcanus II and his prime minister Antipater in power. Hyrcanus was made Ethnarch, Antipater was made Procurator, and the Jews were granted many privileges. But Antipater was the real power behind the throne. His son Phasaël was made governor of Jerusalem, and Herod governor of Galilee. Shortly after this Herod was promoted to the post of military governor of Coele-Syria. In 44 B. C. Caesar was assassinated and Cassius succeeded him in the east. Herod promptly paid his respects and was created governor of Coele-Syria, and promised the kingship of Judea. Meanwhile Antipater was poisoned by Malichus, a friend of Hyrcanus II, and in 42 at the battle of Philippi Cassius and Brutus were defeated. Anthony became ruler of the east and made Herod and his brother Phasaël tetrarchs of all Judea, confirming Hyrcanus in the high priesthood only. But in 41 B. C. the Parthian king, Orodes, invaded Syria, assisted Antigonus, son of Aristobulus, against Herod and Hyrcanus, and caused the whole

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of Galilee to rebel against Herod. Herod escaped with his betrothed Mariamne, granddaughter of Hyrcanus II, to Masada. Thence he fled to Rome by way of Petra and Egypt. In Rome he procured the promise of assistance from Anthony, and the Senate passed a decree making him king of Judea. In 40 B. C. he left Rome and landed in Ptolemais in 39, and was soon engaged in conflict with Antigonus. Assisted by Socius with Roman soldiers, Herod attacked Jerusalem, captured Antigonus, and sent him bound to Rome where he was put to death. Herod married Mariamne and became king of the Jews in reality in 37 B. C.

It was during these days of stirring events that the Psalms of Solomon were written, for they express the ideas and hopes of loyal Pharisees, dwelling upon God's righteousness, his treatment of sinners, and his sure mercy towards Israel. These beautiful Psalms express a longing for the coming of the Messiah, a real human king, and of the Messianic kingdom, and they exhibit a firm belief in a resurrection of the righteous and in their immortality.

The ruling passions of Herod's life were two: First, the establishment and maintenance of his own supremacy; and secondly, the furtherance of the interests of Rome. Once left alone in Judea, he at once began to do away with as much opposition as possible by slaughtering forty-five nobles, practically the whole Sanhedrin. He then set up his own high priest, a Babylonian, by name, Ananel. This offended Mariamne and Alexandra because the latter's son and

Mariamne's brother, Aristobulus III, was the logical candidate. Herod deposed Ananel and made Aristobulus III high priest, but, being convinced against his will, Herod saw to it that Aristobulus was soon drowned at Jericho. From now on plots at Herod's court thickened, a plot to have Herod tried, a plot to place Mariamne on the throne, and a plot to murder Mariamne, until Hyrcanus II, Mariamne, and Alexandra were put to death. Meanwhile Anthony committed suicide in Alexandria, and was succeeded by Augustus in 27 B. C. Augustus gave Herod to understand that he was responsible for the interests of Rome in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Arabia. With this began Herod's activities towards spreading Roman customs, civilization, and culture in the east. He began building great fortresses and repairing others, constructing cities on Roman models with Roman names, erecting theatres, building harbours, and, in 17 B. C., actually began the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem. Nor did he stop there, for he showed a real anxiety for the poor among his subjects and did all in his power to alleviate want and suffering. But, with this, he did not show any genuine understanding of his subjects. He was cruel to them, and inconsiderate of their religious prejudices, even going so far as to place a large golden eagle, the emblem of heathen Rome, over the great gate of the temple.

But while these great works of civilization were being carried out, his innate ruthlessness, relentlessness, impatience, tyranny, and cruelty were at work making his eventful career stormy and tempestuous.

It could not be otherwise, considering the man, for Herod had all the daring of a hero, the training of a soldier, the acuteness of a diplomat, the shrewdness and efficiency of an administrator, but the heart of a tyrant. Consequently as soon as his two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, returned from Rome where they had been sent to be educated, plots began again. Salome, Herod's scheming sister, reported that the young princes were plotting against the king, and no sooner had Herod decreed that his sons should succeed him in order, Antipater, Alexander, and Aristobulus, than plots further multiplied, and after a short period of domestic peace, brought about through the agency of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, father-in-law of Alexander, Herod, at the advice of Augustus, called a council at Berytus, where it was determined to execute Alexander and Aristobulus. This was carried out in 7 B. C., and only five days before Herod's own death Antipater was executed, about 4 B. C.

During these eventful days the mental atmosphere of Palestine was saturated with thoughts and ideas about the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom. It was undoubtedly one of the causes of Herod's nervousness and fear. The Jews were looking forward to the ushering in of that long expected era. Various theories were extant as to who and what the Messiah and Messianic kingdom were to be. Some thought of them in spiritual terms, others more materially. Many Jews expected a militant Messiah who would soon intervene in majesty to destroy the Gentiles and

deliver and preserve Israel. The reports that a Messiah would be raised up to Pheroras, the brother of Herod, and that a "young child" was born at Bethlehem who was the Messiah, were in keeping with the thought of those who spoke of the coming of the future golden era in more spiritual terms. And so Pheroras was put to death and there was a general slaughter of children of Bethlehem. It was in this atmosphere that the human life of the Christ, our Lord, began.

On Herod's death his dominions were divided among his three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philip. Archelaus became king of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, and after a weak and disappointing reign he was banished by Augustus to Gaul, and Judah was placed in the hands of Roman procurators from 6 to 40 A. D. It was during the administration of these officials, who resided at Caesarea, that our Lord lived in Judea. Pontius Pilate was the fifth of these procurators. Herod Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea till 39 A. D., and Philip governed the north until 34 A. D. For a short time all Palestine was united under Agrippa I; 40-44 A. D., during whose reign the Christians were persecuted, St. James was put to death, and St. Peter was imprisoned. The sudden and tragic death of the Messiah was a severe blow to the hope of the establishment of a Jewish kingdom.

The last procurator, and the worst of these inefficient and cruel officials, was Gessius Florus. After a series of oppressive and insolent acts the Jews became

exasperated. In 66 A. D. they accordingly refused to offer the daily sacrifice in the temple for the emperor, a thing which they had faithfully done for fifty years. This was equivalent to a declaration of war. Then came Vespasian, sent by Nero. In 68 Nero died, and Vespasian, as Josephus had predicted, succeeded him, the work of conquest in Palestine being entrusted to Titus, the son of Vespasian. In the spring of 70 A. D. Titus appeared before Jerusalem. Civil war which had been raging for some time ceased, and all united to resist the invader. The siege lasted from April till September. On the 17th of July the daily sacrifice ceased and on the 8th of September the city capitulated. With the fall of Jerusalem came the end of the Jewish nation. There was an uprising in 132 A. D. under Bar-Cochba, in the reign of Hadrian, but the Jews never again established themselves authoritatively in their old home. Jamnia became the real centre of Judaism, and the Jews henceforth devoted themselves to a study of the Torah. It was at Jamnia in 90 A. D. that the extent of the Old Testament was decided upon. Many Jewish works were excluded as too recent, or not sufficiently orthodox, or because they were not associated in authorship with some great ancient Jewish worthy. Second Esdras and Baruch were written too late even to be considered by the council at Jamnia. It was also at Jamnia that that branch of Judaism, which broke away from the natural transition of the religion of Judaism into the religion of Christ, established its ecclesiastical and religious headquarters, and began

that reaction into the older grooves of Jewish religious thought, and that process of hardening, which made a naturally spiritual and noble religion less acceptable to the world. But the true Judaism presented the world with its greatest religious leader whom she herself followed and adored.

The period from the time of the Maccabees until 70 A. D. was an age of developing and deepening religious convictions. The character of God was more clearly understood than at any previous age in the history of Jewish thought. Justice and mercy, righteousness and grace, were combined in one divine character. God was near and yet far off, he was the sovereign of the world and the loving father of all mankind, he was the God of the Jew and Gentile alike. All arbitrariness and insularity ceased to be ascribed to him. Between him and mankind a mediator should intervene. This was the Messiah. From being merely a human being of the line of David, the conception of the Messiah grew and developed from stage to stage until it became common to conceive of him as a spiritual and divine being, pre-existent, God's own son, and in some ways equal with God. His kingdom, too, was to be a spiritual and everlasting one. It was not to be confined to Palestine nor to the Jew, but to be a spiritual sphere and for all mankind. The relationship between God and man, and man and his fellow-man, after many stages of development in which the imperfections of earlier thought were gradually obliterated, was purified and ennobled, until by the time of the rise of Christianity

the Golden Rule everywhere in Judaism was, in essence, operative. God, by the operation of his Word and Holy Spirit, was drawing men nearer to him, and man was reaching out to man in the same divinely sympathetic way. The existence of Angels as ministering spirits of love and mercy, and of demons as powers of sin and temptation, found a place in everyday theological thought. All the old problems of sin and atonement, the suffering of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked, were brought nearer and nearer to solution. Predestination and Free Will became more thinkable in the light of newer and better thought, and the problems of immortality, resurrection, and future judgment were just ready for the illumination which a personal knowledge of our Saviour Christ alone could give. In short, all those great mysteries of God and man, of mediation and inspiration, of life and death, of sin and suffering, of the present and the future, that have through the long ages moved the heart of man to wonder, faith, and worship were, in later Judaism, prepared for their final illumination in the life and character and teachings of Christ.

Some time before the Maccabean period two parties in Judaism began to be differentiated, the priestly party and the scribal party. Shortly after the rise of the Maccabees these two parties developed into the Sadducaic and Pharisaic parties respectively. The Sadducees became more and more political and the Pharisees increasingly more ethical and religious. The Pharisaic party possessed abundant life and re-



ligious virility, and consequently it tended to bubble over into parties and sects. The Essenes were a branch or sect of the Pharisees, and so was a majority of the Zadokites. The Essenes remained a sect, which faded away into oblivion. But the Zadokites became an energetic party consisting not only of Pharisees but also of reforming Sadducees. Among the Zadokites, or more intensely religious Pharisees, all those religious ideas which we have been following in Judaism found fertile soil. In fact, it was these same Zadokites or more religious Pharisees who were responsible for the growth, development, and refinement of all those religious ideas which characterized Jewish thought of the first century A. D. In short, a careful study and comparison of Jewish religious ideas of the beginning and middle of the first century A. D. with what we know of the best Christian thought of the first century will reveal a remarkable and quite unanimous agreement. In reality, the only actual and tangible difference between the Judaism of our Lord's day and Christian teaching was the personality of our Lord. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suppose that Christ's disciples were Pharisees or Zadokites, his followers were Pharisees or Zadokites, and he himself was a Pharisee or Zadokite. That which was later called the Christian Church was a Jewish—Pharisaic or Zadokite—Church. The reforming Pharisees or Zadokites accepted Jesus as the Messiah or Christ whom all Jews were expecting; and those Jews who did not accept him were mostly Sadducees; but, of course, some of them were Pharisees. The



Jewish Messiah did come, established his kingdom on earth, and his followers began missionary work among the Gentiles. Then those Jews were called Christians but they remained nevertheless the true Israel. The present Christian Church, therefore, is not a branch of Judaism, it is Judaism purified and ennobled by the personality of the divine Christ; but it is the present Judaism that is the branch, the reactionary offshoot of the real, growing, and developing Judaism.

It remains only to be said that Israel's residuary gifts to mankind, after her long centuries of moral development, spiritual growth, and religious progress, were just those deep moral and spiritual laws and those high and noble religious conceptions which we now call Christianity. From ancient Babylonian polytheism, through infancy in Egypt, childhood in Canaan, youth in the time of the Kingdom, her coming of age before the time of Amos, maturity under the prophets, Israel passed on to a ripened maturity in the period of Ezra and Nehemiah, and was thus prepared to perfect those fine gifts of moral development and religious knowledge which she bequeathed to the world as her contribution in the form of the noblest religion—because divine—which mankind can ever experience. It was through Israel that the fullness of time came when God through his Son became manifest in flesh.

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